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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

An exploration of the separation-individuation process for adolescents and their parents

by

(C)

Heike Juergens

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF Doctor of Philosophy

IN

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled An exploration of the separation-individuation process for adolescents and their parents submitted by Heike Juergens in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Counseling Psychology.

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External Examiner

Date May 6/87

Dedicated to Aaron and Lauren,

who provided both diversion and perspective.

Abstract

Mahler's (1965) construct of separation-individuation has frequently been adopted by adolescent theorists to conceptualize changes in the adolescent-parent relationship across the teen years. Differing theoretical perspectives yielded marked variations in the perceptions of the nature and content of this adolescent-parent separation-individuation process, however. Psychoanalytic theorists described a period of adolescent turmoil involving conflict with and rejection of the parents (Blos, 1967; Freud, 1958), whereas researchers emphasizing a phenomenological (Douvan & Adelson, 1966; Offer & Offer, 1975) or relational (Youniss & Smollar, 1985) perspective described a transition to increasing adolescent autonomy within the context of ongoing connectedness to parents.

Adolescent theorists often incorporated Mahler's process and substages without first eliciting in-depth observations or descriptions of normal adolescent-parent interrelationships, concurrently including mothers, fathers and adolescents' roles and perceptions. In the present study, both adolescents' and parents' phenomenological perspectives of the adolescent-parent relationship were solicited in semi-structured interviews with a small cross-sectional sample of early, mid- and late adolescents and their mothers and fathers. The interview transcripts describing participants' interrelationships were analyzed and compared across the three age groups for similarities and differences that might reflect characteristics of developmental transitions in the structure and context of these relationships during the adolescent years.

The results supported the application of Mahler's substages of separation-individuation to conceptualize changes in the adolescent-parent relationship, but emphasized a need to differentiate the nature and parameters of separation-individuation processes in infancy and adolescence.

For the present sample, two general transitions were observed from early to late adolescence: (a) a transition in the relational structure from unilateral parental authority and complementary reciprocity to increased symmetrical reciprocity in adolescent-parent interactions; and (b) a transition in the qualitative focus, or content of adolescent-parent relations from shared activities in early adolescence to verbal communications in mid-

adolescence and shared authority and decision-making during late adolescence. Differences were observed in the manner in which individual adolescent-parent diads accomplished these transitions, leading to a hypothesis of two distinct routes for adolescent individuation: a separation-individuation process and an individuation-in-connection process. Implications of these findings to theories of adolescent development and clinical applications are discussed.

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I. Introduction

In each individual's life there occurs a process or period which marks the transition from childhood to adulthood. In western society this transition is known as adolescence. Generally presumed to begin with the onset of puberty, adolescence encompasses both biological and psychological changes as boys and girls leave their childhood and dependence on their parents to become men and women – responsible members of society. How this transition is achieved, however, is a source of considerable controversy, for as noted by Kaplan (1984), the process will vary "from person to person, family to family, society to society, and from one epoch, era, century, decade to the next" (p. 27).

In traditional hunter-gatherer societies, for example, various forms of initiation rites mark the transition to adulthood with symbolic rituals that may span weeks, months or years (Muus, 1970). Through the tribal rites of passage a boy or girl attains mature status and is invested with all adult rights, privileges and responsibilities. In North American society, on the other hand, the change from child to adult status occurs gradually and over an extended period, often ten or more years. Gradual removal of protections and restrictions that accompany childhood occurs at specific ages by law. In most provinces in Canada, for example, the individual obtains compulsory education until age 16, is permitted to drive and hold full-time employment without legal restriction at age 16, and is accorded full adult legal status with the right to vote, enter contractual agreements and assume personal legal responsibilities at age 18.

Adolescents from both North American and tribal societies accomplish the same basic task – becoming accepted as autonomously functioning adults – through two very different routes, each with its own inherent difficulties or pitfalls. Furthermore, the nature and consequences of difficulties or failure in attaining this autonomy vary in each culture for, as noted by Mitchell (1980), although general universal similarities in adolescent life-problems exist, the specific content of these adolescent tasks or problems as well as the severity of trauma and resultant psychopathology associated with them will vary from culture to culture, and "it is precisely the response of the culture to these problems which ascertains their

severity, rather than the problems themselves" (Mitchell, 1980, p. 277).

In North American society the adolescent process of separation from the protection and dependence accorded to the child and the development of increasingly autonomous individual functioning in adulthood involves a significant and potentially difficult transition in the adolescent's relationship to his/her parents:

> In Western, technological society, autonomy is viewed as a necessary element of adult functioning, that occurs after a prolonged period of dependence. The difficulty in achieving emotional autonomy results from intense identification and involvement with a few caregivers for a long time. Since not all societies share this family pattern, not all adolescents experience this psychological process of differentiation and autonomy. Furthermore, not all societies expect or desire adults to experience a high degree of individuation and personal autonomy. (Newman & Newman, 1979, p. 83)

According to Newman and Newman, the concept of an adolescent task involving emotional/ psychological separation-individuation from the childhood dependence on parents is pervasive in our culture. The manner in which this process is accomplished, however, appears far from universal or constant. It is not unusual to hear such diverse comments from young adults reflecting on their own adolescent experiences as "We were really a close family. I always knew that, whatever happened, my parents would be there for me," to "I wouldn't want to relive being a teenager for anything. I felt like I didn't belong at home or in school. I was just miserable." Parents of adolescents also express divergent experiences, with one parent, perplexed by the changes in her child, exclaiming, "I just don't know him anymore. He's like a stranger to us," while another reports that "We seem to be closer than ever. She has become more like a friend than a daughter."

Theoretical models of adolescent development appear to reflect equally diverse views. The psychoanalytic theorists (Blos, 1967, 1979; Freud, 1958) describe a period of "normal adolescent turmoil" such that "... adolescence is by its nature an interruption of peaceful growth, and ... that the upholding of a steady equilibrium during the adolescent process is in itself abnormal" (Freud, 1958, p. 275). Psychoanalysts have emphasized the normalcy and even necessity of a period of social rebellion, affective lability, and increased conflict with parents as a part of healthy adolescent development, to the extent that acceptable patterns of affect and behavior in adolescence might be labelled pathological prior to or following

adolescence. The psychoanalytic view of adolescent separation-individuation focuses on the adolescent-parent tie as an infantile love-object which the adolescent must reject and disengage from in order to attain maturity or an individuated status (Blos, 1979).

Reports from studies of normal adolescents (Offer & Offer, 1975; Douvan & Adelson, 1965) offer a very different perspective. These researchers found that the majority of the subjects in their samples appeared to traverse the adolescent years calmly, accomplishing the transition to adulthood in a seemingly methodical, constructive manner and reported close and supportive family influences throughout. The adolescent-parent tie, as observed by these researchers, represented a "harmonious and well-functioning social system" (Offer, Ostrov & Howard, 1981, p. 71) and provided an ongoing basis of interpersonal support and affection which assisted the adolescents in exploring and attaining individuated adult roles.

Theorists and researchers who have attempted to describe the adolescent-parental separation-individuation process in greater detail have generally equated or compared it with the stages of separation-individuation that Mahler (1968, 1975) observed in infant development (Blos, 1979; Hoffman, 1984; Mollnow, 1981). Because Mahler's depictions of infants' activities like "practicing" (wider exploration of the world with intermittent returns to the security of the mother or 'home-base') or "rapprochement" (alternating or conflicting desires to cling to or push away from parental attachment with resultant indecision, frustration and temper tantrums) are markedly similar to prevalent adolescent behaviors, it appeared reasonable and tempting to assume that a similar process occured during adolescence.

Unfortunately, the wholesale adoption of Mahler's separation-individuation construct frequently ignored the need to observe or investigate actual adolescent-parent interactions to determine the unique content and sequence of issues and behaviors at this later stage of development. Furthermore, many of the theories and research studies regarding adolescent development exhibited major limitations affecting their generalizability to normal adolescent-parent relationships. These limitations included the preponderance of data drawn from clinical

case studies or research involving deviant (delinquent, neurotic or institutionalized) sample groups (Kahn, 1968/69). Furthermore, studies which did use "normal" subjects frequently included only one gender (Offer & Offer, 1975; Pickard, 1982) or obtained global measures regarding adolescents' relationships with both parents jointly (Kelly & Goodwin, 1983; Armsden & Greenberg, 1985) or with mother alone (Coleman, George & Holt, 1977; Tolor, 1976) thereby ignoring the individual contribution of each parent. Parents were almost never asked for collaborative or reciprocal evaluations of the adolescent-parent relationship despite the fact that their views and contributions were considered crucial by numerous authors (White, Speisman & Costos, 1983; Youniss, 1983; Stierlin, Levi & Savard, 1971; Cohen & Balikov, 1974). Finally, the widespread use of structured, quantitative research instruments such as questionnaires, rating scales and inventories may have further limited the scope of previous investigations. Their formulation from a specific theoretical base predetermined the constructs and variables to be examined, thereby possibly resulting in the omission or distortion of important issues, perceptions or effects.

In spite of the general contention that the need to attain autonomy is a primary task of adolescent development, there appears to be very little actual knowledge of how this task is accomplished. The stages of separation-individuation described by Mahler have offered a useful means of conceptualizing the development of autonomy in the adolescent-parent relationship. However, the existence of parallel stages in normal adolescents' development remains to be demonstrated.

The present research study sought to elicit adolescents', mothers' and fathers' phenomenological perspectives regarding the adolescent-parent relationship in order to describe the inter-relational structure for early, mid- and late adolescent samples. The initial interview question constituted an unstructured inquiry into the nature of the adolescent-parent relationship, which enabled the respondents to freely express their individual perceptions and subjective experiences of their interrelationship. This inquiry was followed by a semi-structured interview which incorporated issues or questions that had been identified from previous adolescent research investigating variables or behaviors related to the adolescent

separation-individuation process.

A. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was

1. To provide a thorough investigation and description of the adolescent-parent relationship from the phenomenological perspectives of mothers, fathers and adolescents during early, mid- and late stages of adolescence.
2. To compare the descriptions obtained from 1. above in order to assess the presence and nature of a process of adolescent-parent separation-individuation during the period of adolescence.

B. Definitions

Adolescence. The developmental stage marking a transition from childhood to adulthood and roughly corresponding to the teen years. "The determination of what constitutes adolescence has been debated since Hall (1904) set forth his ideas on the subject at the turn of the 20th century. Hall reported that adolescence begins with the onset of pubertal changes and lasts until the individual reaches the mid-20s," (Ellis & Davis, 1982, p. 696). Delimitation of substages within the period of adolescence is an equally contentious issue. However, considerable support exists for partitioning adolescence into early, middle, and late stages (Blos, 1967; Mitchell, 1986; Sullivan, 1953). These three substages were used in the present study, with early adolescents ranging in age from 12 to 14 years, mid-adolescents from 15 to 17 years, and late adolescents from 18 to 20 years. Results of male and female participants were analyzed separately to accommodate gender differences within these subgroups.

Separation-Individuation. In infancy, refers to the two-tracked developmental sequence from neonatal life to the achievement of psychological birth, or a sense of separate individual entity. Separation involves the child's intrapsychic differentiation, distancing, and disengagement from symbiotic fusion with the mother. Individuation involves the development

of an individual's own personal and unique characteristics (Edward, Ruskin, & Terrini, 1981).

In adolescence, separation-individuation involves a continuation or renewal of the formation of distinct self and object representations. Adolescents separate psychologically from their reality parents and individuate from the introjected parents of their infancy in order to achieve a sense of personal identity and competence (Adelson, 1981). Josselson (1981) states, "The experience of individuation is that of a sharpened sense of one's distinctness from others, a heightening of boundaries, and a feeling of selfhood and will. Adolescents who have done 'good-enough individuation' will have internalized and processed adequate resources to feel that their choices and their lives are their own" (p. 191).

II. Selected Review of the Literature

A. Mahler's Separation-Individuation Theory

The separation-individuation concept originated with Margaret Mahler (1968, 1975) as a result of her years of observations of infants and their parents. Separation-individuation involves developmental progression in two areas: separation refers to the child's movement from fusion with the mother; individuation consists of those steps that lead to the development of an individual's own personal and unique characteristics. Mahler's theory is briefly summarized here to provide an introduction for examining the application of this construct to the period of adolescence.

Mahler (1975) described a developmental progression for the human infant extending from physical birth, and the earliest neonatal stages which she called "normal autism" and "symbiosis," through four sub-phases of a separation-individuation process:
1. differentiation, 2. practicing, 3. rapprochement and 4. consolidation of individuality with beginnings of emotional object constancy. According to Mahler, this separation-individuation process ultimately culminated in the psychological birth of the infant with a sense of self as separate from the mother.

During the stage of normal autism the infant sleeps most of the time, awakening only under pressure of need, particularly hunger, to manifest brief periods of alert activity. Mahler refers to this as a stage of absolute primary narcissism when there is no awareness of another or of an outside. The central task of the normal autistic phase is the achievement of a feeling of internal stability, or biological homeostasis. During this stage the infant experiences its mother "coenesthetically" (Mahler, 1975). That is, the child experiences a general "feel" related to the mother, but as yet has no recognition of her as a need-satisfying mother. The coenesthetic organization of the infant's perceptual system produces a tendency to respond at a level of diffuse, deep sensibility and in a total or global way to any stimulus that surpasses the threshold of reception. So, for example, when the infant experiences a sensation like pain, it perceives its entire being as pained. Over time the inner stimuli experienced by the infant

lead to a beginning awareness or cathexis of the inside of the body and contribute, ultimately, to the development of the body ego and "feelings of self" around which a "sense of identity" will later become established (Mahler, 1968, p. 11).

In its second month, the infant begins to attain a dim awareness of the need-gratifying mother, initially as a fused or symbiotic half of the self. By about the fourth or fifth month, this gradually becomes an increasing awareness of the self and other within a common boundary. This represents the symbiotic phase, and it is during this time that the caretaking, nurturing and protection provided by the "good enough mother" (Mahler, 1975, p. 49) helps to promote the infant's state of "confident expectation" (Edward, Ruskin & Terrini, 1981, p. 10) that its needs will be met and human assistance will be reliably available to it. Through early favorable experiences with the mother, the infant will then develop sufficient trust in others and a healthy narcissistic sense of self to enable it to venture forth in the gradual and complicated move away from its mother.

The stages of autism and symbiosis just described are significant here as forerunners to the separation-individuation sequence proper. Mahler (1975) observed that beginning in about the fifth month, infants enter the first subphase of separation-individuation: the *differentiation stage* in which the infant turns to "other than mother" relationships. With the establishment of familiarity and security in the continued availability of the mothering person the child begins to exhibit an awareness and exploration or study of others, always comparing and "checking back to mother" as the familiar base. During this phase the child frequently also begins to exhibit "stranger anxiety" and later, "separation anxiety," which for Mahler represents the child's first experienced threats of object loss and, concomitantly, a first step toward object constancy and an aspect of evaluation of the love object.

The *practicing subphase*, extending from 7 or 10 months to about 15 months, overlaps the differentiation subphase and is divided by Mahler into early and late periods. During the early practicing subphase, the infant demonstrates increased interest in inanimate objects (which may later become transitional objects toward internalizing the mother's soothing functions) and wider exploration of the world, but always with a return to the mother for

brief periods of contact and reassurance or "emotional refueling" which is characteristic throughout the entire practicing period. When the child begins to walk, in the late practicing phase, the different view of its world, the elation and exhilaration of muscular control and mastery of the environment initiate a giant step towards becoming his or her own person (individuation) (Edward et al., 1981). In this stage the mother's presence and emotional support is still crucial, however, and her absence frequently results in a slowing down of activity and a seeming inward focus which Mahler considered to be the beginnings of self comfort or internalization. The infant's attachment to its father also gains great momentum during this subphase as he becomes the representative for "out there" – the space that, at this subphase, is most valued by the child (Edward et al, 1981, p. 20).

The third separation-individuation subphase, *rapprochement*, extends roughly from 15 to 22 months and encompasses increased perceptual and cognitive abilities which enable the child to gradually realize that the parents are separate persons with their own interests. Mahler considers this a frightening and painful realization for the child, with its attendant feelings of helplessness and powerlessness and the gradual loss of the child's delusions of grandeur. As a result the child experiences a conflict of wanting to resist separation and reestablish the mother-infant bond, versus the need and desire to continue exploring the external world and develop independence. This period is characterized by indecision, frustration, anger, clinging and temper tantrums from the child. The father's role during the rapprochement period becomes vital, since his image as a "love object" is less distorted by symbiotic identification and closer to the external reality, and he can therefore act as a support against the child's backward pull towards symbiosis.

The fourth subphase of separation-individuation starts in about the third year of life, but is actually open-ended with no single definite terminal point. This stage of "***consolidation of individuality and the beginnings of emotional object constancy***" has, as its main tasks, "(1) the achievement of a definite, in certain aspects lifelong, individuality, and (2) the attainment of a certain degree of object constancy" (Mahler, 1975, p. 109). The state of affective (emotional) object constancy which is developed in this subphase is composed of two major

achievements. The first of these reflects the maintenance of the representation of the absent love object such that the child, during the mother's absence, can at least partly substitute a reliable internal image for the mother to facilitate longer and less painful temporary separations from her. The second aspect of libidinal object constancy involves the unification of the "good" and "bad" object into one whole representation such that the love object will not be rejected or replaced if it can no longer provide satisfaction (or is absent). Mahler (1975) describes the mature attainment of this trait as an "ideal and rarely attained instance" of a "*mutual-give-and-take love-object relationship* of the schoolchild and the adult" (p. 111).

The achievement of individuality in Mahler's fourth subphase of separation-individuation occurs in the context of complex cognitive developments, including verbal communication, fantasy, and reality testing. Mahler indicates that the period of rapid ego differentiation, or mental representations of the self as distinctly separate from representations of the object (age 20 to 36 months), paves the way to self-identity formation. Evidence of the intrapsychic separation from mother presented by Mahler included: preference for verbal interactions over other communication forms; development of fantasy play, role play and make believe; increasing interest in playmates and adults other than mother; a sense of time and a capacity to delay gratification and endure separation; active resistance to adult demands; and a wish for autonomy or independence. Once again, however, Mahler emphasizes that her fourth stage by no means represents an end point in the separation-individuation process. In fact it appears more as the beginning of the child's ongoing struggle to maintain this newfound separate, individual functioning and libidinal object constancy against the continuing onslaught of pressures from such sources as drive maturation, castration anxiety or experimental factors like illness, accidents or extended separations from the parents.

B. Separation/Individuation in Theories of Adolescent Development

Mahler herself did not apply the separation-individuation theory to adolescence. However, various theories of adolescent development have described changes in the relationships between adolescents and their parents during this developmental stage. The extent to which Mahler's separation-individuation construct was acknowledged or applied to adolescence varied with the different theorists examined.

Blos (1967, 1979) considered the psychodynamics of adolescent-parent relationships directly analogous to Mahler's observations, and he described adolescence as the "second individuation process, the first one having been completed toward the end of the third year of life with the attainment of self and object constancy" (1979, p. 142). According to Blos, the sexual and aggressive drives which accompany puberty, as well as the renunciation of parental ego support, place additional strain on the adolescent's already weak ego, resulting in regression and the associated negative behaviors. Similarities drawn to Mahler's (1963) observations of separation-individuation of infants include: a heightened vulnerability of personality organization; urgency for psychic structural changes related to the maturational surge; and development of psychopathology if individuation is not accomplished. The process of individuation, according to Blos, "becomes in adolescence the shedding of family dependencies, the loosening of infantile object ties in order to become a member of society at large or, simply, of the adult world" (1979, p. 142). In achieving this, the growing adolescent must pass through numerous stages of ego and drive regression which are essential to his or her normal development. Examples of normal regressed ego states are the adolescent's return to "body language" and idolization or hero worship of famous figures. Through this regression and the rejection of the, until now, controlling parental ego, the adolescent becomes able to re-experience the omnipotent parent of the infantile period with the realization of his or her human failings and virtues. According to Blos,

> The first exhilaration that comes with the independence from the internalized parent or, more precisely, from the parental object representation is complemented by a depressed affect that accompanies and follows the loss of the internal object. The affect accompanying this object loss has been likened to the state and work of mourning. (p. 165)

The early stage of adolescence, then, is marked by opposition to parental bonds and greater investment in external connections, as in groups or friends. The demands for increased freedom frequently raise self-doubts in the parents and may result in their capitulation in order to speed up the development of "mature" independence and reduce conflicts. The result of such parental inconstancy, however, is more likely to hamper developmental progression and, ultimately, to produce the "generation gap" syndrome. Blos' view of adolescent separation-individuation thus also encompasses the predominant psychoanalytic view of adolescence as a period of "normal" turmoil, rebellion and affective lability (Freud, 1958; Blos, 1967) such that intergenerational conflict between adolescents and their parents is not only normal, but even essential to the successful completion of the individuation process.

Erik Erikson (1968) added a psychosocial outlook to the psychoanalytic view of adolescence. He stated that individuals themselves, as well as their social groups, exhibit expectations and resources that shape their personal psychological development. Erikson defined eight developmental life stages from infancy through later adulthood, each stage delineated by a specific psychological crisis which must be successfully resolved for effective adaptation in subsequent life stages.

It should be noted that Erikson's use of the term "crisis" does not mean to imply a threat or catastrophe. Rather, he sees each crisis as a developmental turning point, a crucial period of increased vulnerability and heightened potential (Erikson, 1968, p. 96). Of the eight stages described by Erikson: 1. Trust vs. Mistrust; 2. Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt; 3. Initiative vs. Guilt; 4. Industry vs. Inferiority; 5. Identity vs. Role Diffusion; 6. Intimacy vs. Isolation; 7. Generativity vs. Stagnation; and 8. Integrity vs. Despair, it is the crisis of identity vs. role diffusion which occupies the adolescent years.

Erikson first applied the term identity crisis to World War II veterans in psychiatric treatment who demonstrated a loss of any sense of personal sameness or historical continuity. Later he identified a similar confusion in the youth of his day, who seemed at war inside themselves or with society. Rather than foreboding a severe breakdown or disturbance, however, their experiences seemed to reflect an acute and passing difficulty which Erikson

came to describe as a "normative identity crisis" during adolescence and young adulthood (Erikson, 1968, p. 17).

To understand the purpose and nature of the adolescent-parent relationship during the stage of identity versus role diffusion it is helpful to first examine the previous stages.

Erikson's first stage, *Trust versus Mistrust*, identifies the mother's role, and the quality of her interactions with the child as providing a crucial basis for the youngster's future development of a sense of identity. Erikson states, "the amount of trust derived from the earliest infantile experiences does not seem to depend on absolute quantities of food or demonstrations of love, but rather on the quality of the maternal relationship" (1968, p. 103). At this stage parents must "have certain ways of guiding by prohibition and permission" (p. 103), and must convey a deep conviction that they see some underlying meaning in what they are doing.

In the second stage, *Autonomy versus Shame and Doubt*, the child begins to exhibit rapid gains in muscular maturation, verbalization and discrimination. A recurring tension for the youngster arises from his/her need to coordinate conflicting tendencies to alternately "hold onto" or "let go of" things in his/her life, including the need for parental control. The infant begins to experience his or her own autonomous will, but can be sabotaged by sensing personal loss of control, in conjunction with parental overcontrol. The resultant effect is the child's development of doubt and shame. Yet some parental firmness is necessary and crucial to protect the child against the desire to have his or her choice through demanding appropriation or stubborn elimination. The parents' role at this stage, then, requires a delicate balancing act. Parents must control and be consistent enough to show the child that definite rules and limits exist, and that they (parents) have a sense of autonomous self that is consistent and enduring. Yet they also must allow significant freedom to enable their infant to express and practise his or her own controls or choices.

Erikson's *Initiative versus Guilt* stage occurs sometime near the end of the child's third year. By this stage, the child's mastery of locomotion, language and imagination expands his or her environment, thoughts and understanding (or misunderstanding) so that he or she

must begin to cope with a vastly increasing range of possibilities and choices. Psychodynamically, it is at this age that the child becomes attached to the opposite sex parent but, recognizing that he or she cannot replace mother or father in the marital relationship, feels jealousy toward the same sex parent with attendant anxiety as described by Freud's Oedipus complex.

At this stage the parents' role is to teach the child, through stories and by example, the difference between "real" versus fairy tale. The family "teaches the child by patient example where play ends and irreversible purpose begins and where 'dont's' are superceded by sanctioned avenues of vigorous action" (Erikson, 1968, p. 121). Furthermore, through their involvement in playing and working together, the child and same-sex parent may develop a companionship which serves as a counterforce to the Oedipal-type conflict and guilt.

It is in the stage of *Industry versus Inferiority* that children actively begin to disengage themselves from their parents, according to Erikson. The school-age child is characterized as eager to learn and to make or do things well and in cooperation with others. He/she begins to turn to teachers and other children's parents, thereby achieving a wider basic education for greater future possibilities in choosing values or careers. Failure to develop normally in this stage is attributed to the child's "development of an estrangement from himself and from his tasks - the well-known *sense of inferiority*" (Erikson, 1968, p. 124). The child who has not resolved the crises of the previous stages may still want attachment to his/her mother more than knowledge, or may still compare him/herself with parents and see him/herself as inferior. The parents' role at this stage, then, would be to encourage and reinforce their child's developing skills and beginning independence, while carefully selecting and encouraging relationships with other competent teachers in the school and community.

It is during the adolescent stage of *Identity versus Role Diffusion* that Erikson really described dramatic changes in the adolescent-parent relationship. During adolescence the child is preoccupied with decisions about future activities and a search for people and ideas to have faith in and to serve. At the same time, however, the adolescent is terribly concerned about making a foolish commitment and will cynically mistrust and "test" others, or will prefer to

go against his/her elders rather than feel shame of self or peers. The adolescent will seek peers and adults who endorse his/her imaginative aspirations rather than express doubts and limitations. He/she will experiment with various roles or identify with groups or cliques and in doing so may appear to actively reject or rebel against parental values and role models. The normal adolescent, according to Erikson, will turn away from parents and toward peers or other adults in order to develop his personal and unique sense of identity. The parent's role, beyond acceptance and understanding of the adolescent's need for experimentation and questioning, may be to actually encourage distancing by "providing those forceful ideals which must antecede identity formation in the next generation – if only so that youth can rebel against a well defined set of older values" (Erikson, 1968, p. 30).

The individual's development continues beyond this period of identity crisis throughout adulthood and Erikson's final three stages of psychosocial development (intimacy versus isolation, generativity versus stagnation and integrity versus despair) but for the sake of brevity these will not be elaborated on.

Yet another approach to adolescent development, Piaget's cognitive-structural theory (Piaget, 1972; Piaget & Inhelder, 1969), focuses on the adolescent years as the time of culmination of the growth of intelligence and logical thinking. Piaget did not specifically relate his cognitive developmental theory to the task of adolescent separation – individuation from parents. However, the processes and changes that he described carry implications of potential influences on the adolescent-parent relationship.

Piaget (1972) described four stages of cognitive development: (a) sensorimotor intelligence, from birth to 18 months; (b) preoperational thought, 18 months to 5 or 6 years; (c) concrete operational thought, 5 or 6 to 11 or 12 years; and (d) formal operational thought, beginning in adolescence and continuing through adulthood. This final stage of cognitive development marks the ability to conceptualize about many simultaneously interacting variables, and allows for the creation of a system of laws and rules which can be used for problem solving.

At about age 11 to 15, the child enters the phase that Piaget calls "preadolescence," which corresponds roughly to the defined period of early adolescence used in the present study. Cognitive growth during preadolescence is reflected in the child's developing ability to "disconnect" thought from concrete objects, and to begin thinking about possible or hypothetical combinations or permutations of objects or ideas. The preadolescent also progresses beyond the trial and error method of understanding new phenomena to the use of propositional operations and becomes capable of manipulating transformations according to the four possibilities: that they are identical, inverse, reciprocal, or correlative. With these capabilities the preadolescent child begins to understand and use new mental or logical schema including the notion of proportion, probability, double systems of reference, and hydrostatic equilibrium. Once these intellectual or cognitive abilities have developed in the preadolescent, Piaget says, one begins to observe the "spontaneous development of an experimental spirit" (Piaget & Inhelder, 1969, p. 145).

With these developments in cognitive skills during preadolescence comes a corresponding change in affective development also. Piaget criticizes the traditional psychoanalytic view of adolescent development and its focus on repetitions and analogies with the past (new versions of the Oedipus complex, repetition of the individuation process, etc.), as neglecting the role of moral autonomy and cognitive constructions that "pave the way for an anticipation of the future and receptiveness to new values" (Piaget & Inhelder, 1969, p. 150). Adolescence (age 15 to 18), according to Piaget, is the age of the individual's introduction to adult society, much more than it is the age of puberty. The new and ideal supra-individual values embraced by the adolescent are related to his/her developing theoretical capabilities and concerns with choosing a career or future that will permit him/her to satisfy a need for social reform and for new ideas.

The adolescents' development of abstract, "formal" thought processes and their ability to generate hypotheses about events that they have never perceived carry interesting implications for adolescent-parent relations. Adolescents become able, for the first time, to actively think about or anticipate changes in their relationship with their parents, including

the separation-individuation process per se. With the capacity to anticipate logical sequences and consequences of their actions, adolescents discover a capability for independent decision-making which frees them from total dependence on parental guidance and controls. Having attained the capacity to detect inconsistencies in logic and to think more relativistically about themselves and the world in which they live, adolescents also begin to examine and question the values and doctrines of their parents and may reject or re-introject these, now on the basis of their own developing personal and internal frame of reference. At the same time, the growing importance to the adolescent of attaining adult roles and responsibilities requires him/her to seek increased information and guidance from parents and other adults about work roles and career choices, loving and intimacy, and the development of personal competencies (Newman & Newman, 1979). In developing his/her cognitive skills and competencies, then, the adolescent enters the realm of conflict between the urge to become increasingly independent and autonomous, and the need for ongoing support and self-definition in relation to others, which can be seen as essential components of the separation-individuation process.

C. Other Theories of Adolescent-Parent Separation-Individuation

A somewhat different perspective on adolescent-parent separation is also receiving attention recently largely through the work of Bloom (1980). Although Bloom discussed many of the components of separation-individuation as described by various adolescent theorists (Blos, 1967, 1979; Erikson, 1968), he focused more on the external manifestations of the process and the adolescents' and parents' affective responses than on intrapsychic explanations.

Bloom likened adolescent-parental separation to the process of bereavement and noted that the adolescent's experiences in separating from his/her parents appear to serve as a prototype for all future separations. He described five stages of bereavement as they specifically apply to adolescent-parent separation. The first stage, "the control of the impulse to remain attached," begins with an ambivalent push-pull experience, often unconsciously at first, by both parents and adolescents. The adolescent's childhood identity becomes diffused

and is gradually given up throughout the duration of the separation process. Initial manifestations of this stage include the adolescent's desire to test limits, be away from home more often and form a greater orientation toward the peer group for guidance.

During the second stage the adolescent utilizes increasingly overt demonstrations of independence such as actively questioning parental rules and limits and trying alternative styles of dress or philosophical viewpoints, in order to attain cognitive proof and acceptance of his/her separation. Parental responses of gradual relaxation of support and control with acceptance of open discussion and argument seem to facilitate the adolescent's progression through this stage, while parents who too quickly give up controls find that their adolescents act out more, thereby forcing more limits.

Bloom's third stage, the affective response to the separation, requires the adolescent and parents to acknowledge and deal with various attendant emotions such as depression, mourning, anger or guilt. Nostalgia for the past relationship is often recognized. Both parents and adolescents now require reassurance of each other's love and a basic trust in the relationship so that accepting greater autonomy will not represent rejection or a loss of the relationship.

In the fourth stage adolescents begin, both consciously and unconsciously, to internalize those qualities of their parents that are of value to them, including even variations of previously rebelled against qualities. The parents' task during this stage is to internalize their satisfaction in the parent-child relationship and find alternative outlets for it, including pride and self-esteem in their success as parents and in letting their children go.

The fifth and final stage involves the development of a new, adult to adult, relationship between the parent and adolescent with the integration of a new identity for both. The attenuation of the parent-child relationship allows the adolescent to develop more intimacy with others and enables the adolescent and parent to acknowledge both closeness and distance between them without guilt.

Bloom reviewed data obtained by Offer and Offer (1975) regarding normal adolescent-parental separation to identify five variables that he feels significantly influence

the degree of success or trauma associated with adolescent-parent separations: the readiness of the individual for independence; cognitive influences; the nature of the parent-child relationship; past separation experiences of parents or adolescents; and cultural influences. Bloom's first variable, "The readiness of the individual for independence," incorporates the adolescent's confidence, expectations for success, and previous experience with independence and responsibility. Behavioral measures of readiness include happy experiences at summer camp or at a part-time job, and parental expectations regarding consequences of separation-individuation for themselves and their adolescents.

The second variable, "cognitive influences, including object constancy and the assimilative-accommodative modes of adaptation" describes the emergence of formal operational thinking as crucial to restructuring interpersonal relationships through separation-individuation. With the development of formal operational thinking, as described by Piaget (1969, 1977), adolescents may become increasingly aware of their parents' subtle influences and patterns of relating. They begin to recognize cultural differences and diversities of norms, values and ideals. With these expanding intellectual capacities, the adolescents may begin to question and to restructure their relationships with their parents as well as their self-identity.

Bloom's third variable affecting the adolescent separation-individuation process, "the nature of the parent-child relationship" emphasizes the need for feelings of trust and mutual respect between parent and adolescent.

Variable four, "The past experiences of the parents and the adolescent in separation" is based on Offer and Offer's (1975) finding that adolescents who experienced a separation from a significant other in childhood were more likely to experience difficulty when separating from their parents, and on Stierlin's (1974) contention that the adolescent separation experiences of the parents from their own mother and father produced the most important past influence on their current expectations of their child's separation.

Bloom's fifth variable is "the cultural influences on the separation process." These cultural influences currently include the rapid rate of cultural change, wide cultural diversity, rapid change of expectations placed on children by adults, and lack of rituals and guidelines

for rites of passage.

Although Bloom (1980) did not explicitly identify the similarities between his five stages of adolescent-parental separation and Mahler's 4-stage separation-individuation process, parallels between the two are quite apparent. Josselson (1980, pp. 188-210) also described changes in the adolescent-parent relationship and identified specific behavioral components of the separation-individuation process, but related these directly to the specific subphases delineated by Mahler and her associates.

According to Josselson, the latency phase of pre-adolescence encompassed the processes described in Mahler's differentiation subphase of separation-individuation. During latency, the child is both realistically and emotionally dependent on the parents, and his/her superego (composed primarily of parental introjects) is in harmony with the reality parents (although latency children may be even more strict about moral issues than their parents). Self esteem is derived largely through parental approval and the growth of skills guided by the parents. Latency aged children believe strongly in parental judgment and parental omnipotence. The child's ego is differentiated from that of the parent in the recognition that he or she is a separate person, but there is a sense of symbiosis or togetherness in the child's identification with parental ego functions. Behavioral manifestations of this symbiosis include the observation that even though they may break their parents' rules, latency aged children do not challenge the rightness of the rule, and, in telling about an experience of their parents these children may express as strong emotional intensity and detail as if the experience had been their own.

Mahler's second subphase (practicing) is also repeated during latency and early adolescence according to Josselson. Although the adolescent continues to depend on the parental ego and maintains generally close proximity to the mother, the onset of puberty produces new and exciting and/or frightening feelings which the adolescent cannot share with his/her parents. This marks the beginning of certain areas of adolescent separateness and autonomy from parents, which appears to delight early adolescents (aged 11 to 13) who define themselves primarily by saying "no" to any attempt to infringe on their freedom.

According to Josselson, "In some ways early adolescence is a second stage of omnipotence – a young person at this stage feels he can do anything, the self is all good; bad self-representations are projected onto others" (1980, p. 194). The adolescent asserts his/her separateness and individuality through emphasizing differences from his/her parents in as visible a manner as possible. Examples of this include sporting bizarre hairstyles or clothing, behaving in ways most likely to provoke their irritation, and physically separating by spending less time with parents and more with peers, as well as keeping secrets or confiding in peers rather than parents about certain issues or concerns.

Although adolescent behavior is more symbolic than physical, the middle adolescent demonstrates the same ambivalent wishes to rely on, yet repudiate, parental ego support that Mahler described as the infants' alternate clinging to and pushing away from its mother in the rapprochement phase. Josselson suggests that adolescents sudden awareness of their separateness and the negative aspects of psychological detachment from their parents are responsible for motivating an increased desire to restore harmony and be understood and supported by the parents. Like the rapprochement child, the individuating adolescent experiences ambivalence between the desire to function autonomously and the need for a secure home base and ongoing connectedness with the parents. It is this ambivalence that, for Josselson, provides a link between the opposing views of adolescent development put forth by the "turmoil" theorists like Blos, Freud and Erikson, who believe adolescent individuation requires devaluation and rejection of the parents, versus the phenomenological researchers (Adelson, 1980; Offer and Offer, 1969), who observed ongoing positive, supportive and close relations between most adolescents and parents. Josselson views these two apparently disparate views as complementary aspects of the adolescent individuation process, involving attempts to gain some distance and autonomy from parents with compensatory efforts to reestablish connectedness.

The phenomenon of adolescent runaways is most likely to be seen at the rapprochement phase of adolescent individuation, with those adolescents who experience difficulty in separating, according to Josselson. She notes however, that this wholesale

abrogation of parents through physical and emotional withdrawal or separation seldom aids the adolescent's individuation process or feeling of intrapsychic separateness. Rapprochement is critical to adolescent individuation, says Josselson, "in that it reinforces the feeling of individuality in the context of ongoing relationship" (1980, p. 195). Josselson found that adolescents themselves were able to elucidate this two-pronged desire when they reported gratitude for and dependence on parental rules and limits, but noted that they would rarely if ever admit this to their parents.

Josselson also saw an adolescent parallel of Mahler's final phase of separation-individuation with the onset of formal cognitive operations (Inhelder & Piaget, 1958) and the adolescent's concurrent realization of the limits of the parental ego for controlling or maintaining the adolescent. The adolescent now becomes capable of observing his/her environment more clearly and can construct hypotheses about how the world operates, and predict future developments or aspirations. As a result the adolescent needs to rely less on parental guidance or views and, in fact, begins to recognize that his/her parents really cannot tell him/her what to do or think no matter how much either of them may want it. Initially the individuating adolescent may turn more to his/her peers for self-identification during this phase, but once he/she has gained sufficient experiences of individual distinctness and separateness, one begins to observe his/her individuation in the ability to be "most himself *with* others on whose ego he formerly relied" (1980, p. 197). The successfully individuated adolescent, according to Josselson, may think and act in very different ways from his/her parents, but these discrepancies most often reflect the adolescent's appropriate adaptations to societal or cultural changes across the generations. Moreover, mature adolescents appear able to acknowledge their parents' different experiences and to forgive them for their inability to guide the adolescent.

More recently, Youniss and Smollar (1985) provided some interesting insights into the separation-individuation process of adolescence based on their findings from a series of studies investigating adolescent relationships with parents and friends. The objective was to describe adolescents' interpersonal relationships from the perspective of a structural approach.

Youniss and Smollar investigated adolescents' views on relationship issues such as shared activities, communication, conflicts, perceived obligations and self concept. Operating from a Piaget-Sullivan perspective "that interpersonal relations consist in large part of interactions that are conceptually organized by the participants into structures" (p. 15), Youniss and Smollar examined their obtained data for consistency in form (as opposed to content). They expected to find recurrent forms of interactions that would represent invariants by which relationships are structured and known. These interactive forms would then serve to describe or generate characteristics of adolescents' interpersonal relationships and, implicit from these, adolescents' development as individuals in relation to others.

Youniss and Smollar identified a general transition in the adolescent-parent relationship from a structure of unilateral authority in pre-adolescence to increasing symmetrical reciprocity, particularly in the mother-adolescent relationship, during the period of adolescence. The adolescents clearly differentiated their relationships with their mothers versus fathers. Fathers were seen as more likely to extend the structure of unilateral authority into adolescence, and were described as more distant and uncommunicative, especially by their daughters. Contrary to psychoanalytic theorists' emphasis on emancipation or separation from parents during adolescence, however, Youniss and Smollar observed that adolescents "seek to remain connected to parents and that this goal is not incompatible with their simultaneous attempt to assert their individuality" (1985, pp. 132-133). The process of individuation, according to their findings, developed gradually through a series of accommodations between parent and adolescent, and was typically not completed during adolescence but continued into adulthood.

D. Criticisms of Adolescent Separation-Individuation Theories

Some direct criticism of the application of the separation-individuation construct to adolescence does exist, although there appears to be limited consensus regarding the problem issue. Kaplan (1984) criticized what she called the "recapitulationist slogan" that adolescence is a second separation-individuation, insisting that Mahler's work is increasingly being

misapplied as a model for understanding the adolescent stage of development. While acknowledging behavioral similarities during infancy and adolescence, such as the alternating movement away from and return to a secure home base in the practicing phase and the erratic moods, negativism and grief reactions of the rapprochement stage, Kaplan preferred to apply the separation-individuation term only to the period of infancy. Adolescence, to Kaplan, involves an ongoing individuation process aimed at reconciling the individual's genitality and morality, but does not involve "separation," which she reserved for the infant's gradual recognition and acceptance of the boundaries between its own self and the mother.

Schafer (1973) on the other hand, objected to the application of the term "individuation" to the adolescent process, suggesting that it refers specifically to a pre-relationship phase of development in infancy. He preferred to apply the term "detachment" to the adolescent process of giving up infantile object ties, but his definition of detachment as involving the adolescents' effort to eradicate their parents' influence on them was rejected by Adelson (1981) as offering too extreme a picture of the changes in the adolescent-parental relationship.

Youniss (1983) and White, Speisman, and Costos (1983) also disagreed with the concept of adolescent detachment from parents and suggested that, although a transition to individuation or adulthood does occur for adolescents, they do not necessarily separate from or lose the parental relationship. According to these investigators, the adolescent's move toward individuation is experienced more as an interactive restructuring of the adolescent-parent relationship into one that is symmetrical and mutual, with participants treating each other as equals yet maintaining respect for each other's individual personalities. Youniss criticized the conventional separation-individuation view, stating "The notion that there is a developmental course to the parent-adolescent relation and the parent-young adult relation is not widespread in the literature. The more conventional view is that the adolescent develops as an individual precisely by moving outside the relation with parents. The conventional view also holds that this movement occurs through the adolescent's own efforts as he or she resorts to reasoning that is self-instigated and self-guided" (Youniss, 1983, p. 95). He also criticized

the majority of research studies that have been undertaken to investigate adolescent development and the parent-adolescent relationship, stating "Survey, questionnaire, and single-subject interview data may be more conducive to thinking of the adolescent as a lone reflective organizer of reality" (Youniss, 1983, p. 102). Instead, says Youniss, "The form of intersubjectivity that is evident at the onset of adolescence differs from the form of intersubjectivity found about ten years later. The young adult has established an individuated self that the early adolescent has not envisioned. At the same time, however, the young adult, who prizes the self-distinctiveness, also begins to appreciate the individuated character of the parents. Neither part of this balanced view arises de novo. Indeed, the balancing and the differentiated parts owe much to the communicative interaction that has gone on in the parent-adolescent relation and that sustains it through its transformation during the period" (Youniss, 1983, p. 107).

In spite of the disagreements and criticisms regarding various aspects of the separation-individuation process in adolescence, it does appear that at least some part of the term "separation-individuation" is being almost universally applied to the process whereby adolescents' relationships with their parents change as they move from childhood to adulthood. Because of this the separation-individuation terminology will be adhered to throughout the present study. Recent research studies which investigate the separation-individuation process during adolescence, or which focus on specific variables in adolescent development that are presumed to influence or identify the adolescent separation-individuation process, are examined in the following section.

E. Recent Research Into Adolescent-Parent Separation-Individuation

A recent attempt to directly evaluate the applicability of Mahler's separation-individuation construct to the adolescent period was conducted by Mollnow (1981). Mollnow examined the adolescent's task of achieving psychological separation from the parents, using Crastnopol's (1980) Identity Vis-A-Vis Mother Questionnaire to categorize adolescent-mother relationships along the lines of Mahler's theory. Mahler's subphases were represented by four

subscales, conceptualized as 1. Symbiotic – in which the adolescent and mother are intensely involved with each other and their needs, feelings and opinions are minimally distinguished; 2. Distancing – which involves the adolescent's moving away from the symbiotic tie with mother by using hostile, angry or rejecting attitudes and feelings to emphasize his/her separateness; 3. Practicing/Rapprochement – which corresponds to Mahler's practicing and rapprochement subphases and describes interactions with mother which are intensely ambivalent, reflecting alternative desires to push away from or cling to mother; and 4. Individuated – applied to parent-child relationships characterized by mutual respect, affection and ease of interaction. Applying the questionnaire to over 400 male and female high school students aged 14 to 18, Mollnow (1981) found a trend to decreasing closeness toward mother, with sharp declines in adolescents' symbiotic scores and increases in distancing scores from age 14 to 16, and a slight reversal in the trend for 17 and 18 year olds, though not returning to previous levels of closeness. These results for adolescents did reflect Mahler's theory that a "stormy" period with increased hostile or tense interactions between parent and child occurs in the mid-phase of the separation-individuation process. The adolescents' rapprochement scores, however (or ambivalence toward mother) had a decreasing linear relationship with age from the years 14 to 18, which clearly differed from Mahler's observations of a mid-infancy peak in children, and the adolescents' individuated scores revealed no significant age effects, with mean values remaining relatively high and stable throughout adolescence. Mollnow concluded that a lengthy period of ambivalence toward mother appeared to span the adolescent years, and adolescents' sense of personal individuation remained high throughout. Mollnow suggested that a form of separation-individuation may occur at adolescence, but that adolescent-parent separation-individuation should not be considered to be a repetition of that earlier separation-individuation process described by Mahler.

In another recent study, Hoffman (1984) extrapolated from Mahler's separation-individuation phase of early childhood to indentify four analogous aspects of the psychological separation process during adolescence. "Functional independence" referred to

the adolescent's ability to manage and direct his/her practical or personal affairs without parental help. "Attitudinal independence" referred to the differentiation of attitudes, values and beliefs between the adolescent and his or her parents. "Emotional independence" was defined as freedom from excessive need for approval, closeness or emotional support and "conflictual independence" was seen as freedom from excessive guilt, mistrust, anger or resentment toward either parent (p. 171). Scale items were originally generated by the author and his colleagues for their face validity to the constructs being measured. Hoffman tested this validity through his prediction of better personal adjustment (measured with the adjective checklist and two global questions regarding academic or love relationship problems) in adolescents who achieved greater psychological separation from their parents. His hypotheses were supported for conflictual independence scores, and partly supported for emotional independence, but attitudinal independence from parents correlated negatively with a personal adjustment scale for his adolescent sample. Hoffman's findings, then, did not fully support his hypothesis that greater psychological separation from parents is related to better personal adjustment in adolescents and, in fact, seem to suggest instead that continued close identification, at least with parental attitudes, may be important to the adolescent's personal adjustment. Hoffman explained this unexpected finding by suggesting that attitudinal similarity to parents could represent a measure of internalization of the parental objects which may facilitate a better relationship with the parents and, consequently, lead to better personal adjustment.

Hoffman's (1984) study is interesting as an example of the process undertaken by many researchers in adolescence. He began with a description of observed stages in individual psychological development during another phase in the life span, and attempted to anticipate similar processes during adolescence. This approach is clearly constrained by the somewhat arbitrary definition of adolescent developmental stages without the benefit of independent observations of adolescent behaviors and interactions with their parents. A more reasonable initial investigation would be, like Mahler (1975), to base theoretical formulations on direct observations of parent-child interactions and attempt to discover universal stages of

development. Mahler's work with infants, of course, required direct observation of behaviors due to their inability to verbalize their experiences, while research involving adolescents and adults can utilize either direct behavior observations or subjects' phenomenological descriptions of behaviors and attitudes related to a particular construct.

F. Variables Related to Adolescent-Parent Separation-Individuation

The following variables relevant to the separation-individuation process during adolescence have been extrapolated from adolescent research studies and will be examined in greater detail: 1. the role of the parents (parents' perceptions and expectations, parents' support versus distancing, and parents' behavior or parenting styles); 2. attitude and value divergence between adolescents and parents; 3. adolescents' relationships with peers; and 4. adolescent identity development.

The Role of the Parent in Adolescent Separation-Individuation

Traditional psychoanalytic theory described the developing child as a primary locus of self-influence, internalizing parental beliefs or controls in order to attain individuated personal functioning. More recently, however, theorists (Johnson, 1959; Kelly & Goodwin, 1983; Stierlin et al., 1971) have begun to examine the parents' own active contributions to their child's development. Johnson (1959) for example, described a process whereby parents actively but unconsciously fostered their child's acting out behaviors in order to gratify their own poorly integrated impulses and/or their own hostility toward the child. Research and case studies of adolescent-parent interactions have produced evidence of a number of parental influences in the adolescent separation-individuation process, including parental perceptions and expectations, parental support versus distancing, and parental behavior or parenting styles. Each of these variables will be examined in greater detail.

Parental Perceptions and Expectations

Stierlin, Levi and Savard (1971), observed and interviewed families with troubled adolescents, during or after therapeutic intervention, to determine various parental

perceptions and expectations which might affect the adolescent's separation. They identified three relevant areas of parental perception. The first reflected a belief in the child's potential autonomy or ability to attain independence; second was the child's capacity to make shifts in object relations, that is, to form successful friendships and sexual or marital partnerships; and third was the adolescent's perceived loyalty to the parent, or parental expectations of how negatively or positively they themselves would be affected by the adolescent's leaving. Stierlin et al. found separation-inhibiting or ambiguous parental perceptions and expectations throughout their deviant sample. They found that "The parents typically tended to focus not so much on a specific lack of skills or experiences that could be corrected through effort or training. Instead, they aimed at seemingly deep-rooted and incorrigible character defects they perceived as being beyond repair" (Stierlin et al., 1971, p. 417). The messages sent by the parents, either overtly or covertly, were seen by the researchers as often representing a self-fulfilling prophecy. These messages were accepted and carried out by the adolescent who then became incapable of achieving normal individuation or separation from the adolescent-parental relationship. Similar results were described by Bloom (1980) who noted that parents' expectations regarding consequences of their separation-individuation, both for their adolescents and themselves, influence the adolescents' own readiness for independence.

Wechter (1983) also discussed the effects of parental expectations, particularly parents' fears of loss or separation from their child, as inhibiting the adolescent's ability to leave his or her family through a normal maturational process. Wechter's focus on a family systems perspective identified a dysfunctional family's inability to establish new inter-relationships and boundaries as the adolescent child matured and attempted to leave home. She described the case-history of a schizophrenic young man whose parents were over-involved in their son's problems and everyday decisions, and who sent inconsistent messages to their child regarding his desire to become more independent and separate from them. His inability to reconcile or satisfy his parents' expectations ultimately resulted in his becoming increasingly withdrawn, dependent and incapable of maintaining

any intimate peer relationships. By recognizing the extent to which therapeutic interventions with this young man could be sabotaged by his parents' expectations, Wechter became cognizant of the need to involve the parents more actively in the goals and process of his treatment program.

Parental Support versus Distancing

As noted by Wechter, parents not only have expectations and perceptions of their child's ability to successfully achieve separation or individuation, they may also lack confidence in their own ability to master and endure the various stresses and changes of the adolescent process. Parents have their own developmental tasks to accomplish, and may have residual conflicts from previous separation experiences or may be unprepared to release their own idealized parental self-image and attendant feelings of power or possessiveness. Cohen and Balikov (1974) examined the effects of parental responses to adolescent separation-individuation attempts and identified a process whereby the parents appeared to reject or distance themselves from the adolescent. They saw this parental disengagement or abdication from the adolescent as a flight from feelings of helplessness in their changing roles and interactions with the adolescent. The result, for the adolescent, is a sense of abandonment and confusion and an inability to restructure his relationship to the idealized parental object and attain an individuated status. According to the authors, "Both parent and adolescent must take responsibility for engagement in the process of individuation by which differences are established and mutuality in relationships achieved. Where the parents have disengaged, there is no model in the family system for communications whereby differences in goals and values can be worked out" (Cohen & Balikov, 1974, p. 228).

The need to have parents who are actively engaged with, communicative with and supportive of their adolescent child is thus considered one of the important elements facilitating the adolescent-parent separation-individuation process. Marcia (1983), identified "confidence in parental support" (p. 219) as one of the most important precursors at early adolescence to the achievement of the late adolescent's individuated

identity. Similar to the attachment-exploration or differentiation phase of infancy (Bowlby, 1969; Mahler, 1975), the "healthy early adolescent is an explorer by necessity, and hence, needs to feel that he or she has a dependable home base" (Marcia, 1983, p. 219). Without this support, or with a fear of abandonment by the parental love object, the adolescent is unable to experiment with more autonomous roles and develops a lack of mature commitments and what Marcia calls an "identity diffuse" state (1983, p. 221).

Parental Behavior or Parenting Styles

In addition to parental perceptions, expectations, support or distancing, parents' child rearing styles provide a further influence on the development and successful separation-individuation of the adolescent. Conger (1979) and Kelly and Goodwin (1983) described three basic parenting styles, labelled as authoritative (democratic), authoritarian (autocratic), or egalitarian (permissive or laissez-faire). The authoritative parents provide an appropriate balance of discipline and control, with opportunities for independence and influence by the adolescent. These parents are described as showing respect for and listening to their children, involving them in decision-making, and allowing them age-appropriate independence. The authoritarian parent, on the other hand, simply tells the adolescent what to do, providing little or no opportunity for two-way interaction or discussion. Adolescents raised in an authoritarian manner were seen as lower in self-confidence and self-esteem, less able to act and think independently, and likely to develop a weak and changeable conscience based on external rewards and punishments. The egalitarian parent was seen as overly-permissive, and as abdicating parental responsibilities and authority under the guise of fostering individuality and equality within the family. Adolescent children from egalitarian families were found to exhibit a higher incidence of socially deviant behaviors, like high drug use, than children from other parenting styles.

Differences in parenting styles have also been identified in the literature for groups of adolescents labelled delinquent or deviant versus normal. Robinson (1978), for

example, found that adolescent boys rated as "out of control" were more likely to describe their parents as inconsistent in setting and enforcing rules; less likely to praise, encourage or show interest in them; and higher in hostile detachment than parents of within-control adolescents. Schaeffer (1965) applied his "Children's Reports of Parental Behavior Inventory" to adolescent groups identified as delinquent versus normal. Adolescents in the delinquent group rated both parents significantly higher on measures of extreme autonomy, lax disclipline and control through guilt, and rated fathers as significantly less positive and loving, but mothers as significantly more positive and loving than did the normal group. The results of this study indicated the importance of various components of parental behavior as well as the need to consider maternal and paternal behavior separately in assessing the effect on adolescent development.

Attitude and Value Divergence Between Adolescents and Parents

According to predominant theories of adolescent development, one could expect a period of marked rebellion and rejection of parental values as the adolescent attempts to prove his/her own separateness and independence from the parent. Following this period of emphasized differentiation it might then be possible for the adolescent to reintegrate parental values and beliefs, now internalizing them as his/her own personal value system. In fact, observations of substantial attitudinal and value differences between adolescents and adults led to the coining of the popular catch-phrase "generation gap" to describe the supposedly pervasive and extreme ideological differences between adults and adolescents. Adelson (1980) summarized numerous research studies investigating differences in opinions and values between parents and their children, however, and concluded that there is little empirical evidence of marked disagreement between parents and their children.

Research studies investigating the divergence of parental and adolescent attitudes and values during adolescence produced generally similar findings. Feather (1975) described findings of two extensive values surveys of adolescents and parents during the early 1970's using the Rokeach Value Survey (1973). The results showed both similarities and discrepancies

between parents and their children, with daughters generally being closer to their parents than were sons in their average value systems. Values such as a world at peace, happiness, wisdom, honesty and responsibility were given high rankings by both groups. Both agreed, as well, that values like pleasure, social recognition, salvation, obedience and imagination were lower in importance. Significant differences were observed, however, in that parents rated values concerning family and national security, self-respect and responsibility, politeness to others, cleanliness, and competence higher than their children. The adolescents, on the other hand, attributed more importance than their parents to values like excitement and pleasure, equality and freedom, a world of beauty, close companionship with others, and a broad-minded, imaginative stance toward the world.

More recently Barclay and Sharp (1982) also administered the Rokeach Value Survey to a group of adolescent girls and their mothers, and found little or no divergence in mean rankings of items considered most or least important. There was some difference, however, between values rated highest and lowest for this group compared to those reported by Feather (1975). The Barclay and Sharp sample ranked values like honest, loving, forgiving, clean, salvation, and family security at the top of the scale, while values labelled imaginative, intellectual, logical and a sense of accomplishment were relegated to the lowest rankings. It appears very likely for this latter sample, however, that the predominance of baptist religious affiliations of the subjects contributed both to the convergence of mother-daughter values and to the important of specific values like salvation and forgiving which were considered less important in Feather's study.

Comparisons of the two studies served to underline the variety of influences producing value discrepancies or similarity between generations. Some of these may be related to effects of the adolescent-parent separation-individuation process, but one must also consider factors like the individual roles and responsibilities attached to a particular time in each person's life, as well as specific social or cultural experiences which may be unique to a particular generation or historic event.

Toler (1976) measured the attitudes of high school and college students and their parents regarding work and higher education, and found the adolescents significantly less traditional in their attitudes than the parents. However, this divergence in attitudes was less extreme than generally assumed by the "generation gap" hypothesis and, surprisingly, the high school students revealed less discrepancy in degree of conservatism of attitudes from parents than did college students. Rather than supporting the notion of mid-adolescent rebellion or rejection of parental values, these findings would suggest that "parents continue to exert a greater influence in shaping their children's attitudes during the high school years than subsequently" (Toler, 1976, p. 38). It should be noted, however, that anonymity of obtained responses in this study precluded comparing individual parent-child attitude similarities and, according to a summary of parent-child attitude research conducted by Connell (1972), there is generally far more correspondence in overall age group comparisons than in specific "pair" or individual parent-child comparisons.

An interesting slant on the question of attitude similarities and differences has been taken by some researchers who investigated adolescents' and parents' assessments of each other's attitudes. Lerner (1975) asked adolescents and their parents to rate how much the other group's attitudes varied from their own. In his study the adolescents overestimated attitudinal differences, predicting 19 areas of significant discrepancy, while their parents underestimated the differences, expecting only two areas of significant conflict (compared to an actual measure of 10 scales showing such differences between adolescents and parents). The discrepancy ratings suggest that adolescents may be inclined to overemphasize differences between themselves and their parents, and could reflect the distancing expected in the separation-individuation process, while parents appear to need to emphasize the continuity and similarity between the generations.

Coleman, George and Holt (1977) asked adolescents and preadolescents and their parents (mothers) to rate the "average teen" and "average adult" on 8 bipolar traits such as "hard-working-lazy" or "grateful-ungrateful." The adolescents consistently rated adults more positively than adolescents on all traits. Adults rated themselves more positively on

characteristics like hardworking, quiet, and tidy but rated adults and adolescents as equal on more fundamental personality traits like "honest-dishonest." Results were the same for both adolescent and preadolescent groups, suggesting a lack of evidence for developmental increases in an attitude gap between children and their parents during adolescence. The authors suggested that the observed agreement regarding broad values systems and attitudes refutes the notion of a significant "generation gap" of attitudes between adolescents and parents. However, among the agreements demonstrated between the generations was the recognition of differences or conflicts in day-to-day living around specific life-style issues like tidyness, noisiness or laziness, which the authors considered to be sources of tension potentially as serious as disputes over broad values.

Orloff and Weinstock (1975), questioned the possibility that adolescents and parents, while agreeing on or endorsing similar attitudes, might actually attribute different meanings or interpretations to the attitude in question. They factor-analyzed parent and adolescent responses to a thirty-six item survey of attitudes on contemporary issues. Comparisons of item means had shown no significant differences between the two groups, however the factor structures for adolescents and parents were quite dissimilar. The authors concluded that a generation gap does indeed exist, at the more fundamental level of different attributed meanings for the issues measured, rather than simply being a matter of similar degrees of favourableness of the attitude items.

Adolescents' Relationships with Peers

The adolescent's separation from close relationships with parents is generally presumed to coincide with an increased involvement with their peer group (Blos, 1979; Erikson, 1968; Floyd and South, 1972). Burke and Weir (1977) obtained behavioral self-reports of frequency and type of self-disclosure by adolescents to their mothers, fathers and peers. They found that adolescents were significantly more likely to talk to their peers about a wider range of problems and anxieties than to their parents, and significantly more likely to disclose troubles to their mothers than fathers. They also expressed greater satisfaction with

the help offered by their peers and least satisfaction with help from their fathers. These results appear to support the notion of increased closeness in peer relationships during adolescence, although the research did not directly investigate the presence of developmental changes in disclosure to parents or peers during the adolescent years.

Greenberg, Siegel and Leitch (1983), however, reviewed research findings regarding the shifting salience of parent and peer reference groups and concluded 1. that parent and peer influences are not contradictory, 2. that parents' counsel is more often preferred to that of peers in important decisions regarding values or future choices, 3. that adolescents prefer peer help if they perceive their parents as rejecting or indifferent, and 4. that parental influence is generally considered more significant than that of peers throughout adolescence. Greenberg et al. (1983) and Armsden and Greenberg (1985) subsequently administered an inventory of adolescent affective attachments to parents and peers to further investigate the relative importance of adolescents' relationships with parents and peers during the period of separation-individuation and achievement of autonomy. They found no evidence of a shift in attachments to parents versus peers during adolescence, identifying instead a tendency for strong generalized attachment with both parents and peers, in healthy adolescents. Close attachments to both parents and peers were found to correlate with measures of psychological well-being, self-esteem, life-satisfaction, and physical health. Close attachments to parents moderated the effects of high life stress on adolescents' self-esteem, while peer attachments did not. Thus, while an adolescent's relationship with parents and peers both were seen as important, the adolescent-parent relationship appeared to remain a more powerful predictor of well-being than peer attachments throughout the adolescent years.

Results of a recent unpublished survey of grade seven, nine and eleven students (Juergens, 1983), similarly showed no decrease in adolescents' value similarities or feelings of closeness or affiliation toward their parents over the three grade levels. Peer affiliation ratings did show significant differences from grade seven to nine, however, providing some evidence of greater variability or uncertainty in the adolescents' feelings of closeness and value similarities to peers at grade seven, with an increase in peer affiliation by grade nine which

then remained reasonably consistent in grade eleven for the groups sampled. The discrepancy of the observed data for measures of parent and peer closeness during adolescence, compared to theoretical expectations, raised questions regarding the possibility that current theories may overemphasize adolescent-parent separation, perhaps because of their origins with non-representative adolescent groups, or that they may reflect parental perceptions of adolescent-parent separation which the teens themselves do not experience.

Other researchers have approached the question of an inverse relationship between adolescents' involvement with parents and peers from the perspective of measuring actual behaviors rather than expressed feelings. Montemayor (1982) measured adolescents' reports of the amount of time and types of activities (task oriented or recreational "free time") they engaged in with parents, with peers or alone over the course of three days. Their findings did not support an inverse relationship, showing instead that adolescents are about equally involved with parents and peers, but spend much more task-time with parents and free-time with peers. Examination of male and female time-use separately, however, revealed that time spent with parents, for females, was inversely related to time spent with peers, while for males time spent with parents was negatively correlated with time spent alone. These results were explained in light of male identity presumably being based on instrumental competence and intrapersonal skills, while female identity is based on interpersonal competence.

Montemayor also correlated his time-use data with a measure of frequency of conflicts with parents and found that adolescents who frequently argued with their mothers spent more time with their fathers rather than with peers or alone. Whether this observation reflects the father's ability to "fill-in" when the maternal relationship is stressful, or implies that closeness to father results in conflict with mother is not clear from the data available. It does point out once again, however, the need to examine both mother-adolescent and father-adolescent relationships in evaluating the separation-individuation process.

Adolescent Identity Formation

The development of an enduring and distinct sense of self, or identity formation, has been described as a major task of the adolescent period (Erikson, 1968). The phenomenon of identity formation is indivisibly linked to the adolescent individuation process, according to Josselson (1980):

> *Identity formation* (or ego identity) refers to the work of the ego in integrating aspects of self into a coherent whole. Aspects of the self that have become individuated and autonomous must be incorporated into identity. Therefore there is an interdependant sequence of: individuation/autonomy/identity formation. It is also recursive in the sense that increasing identity formation leads to further individuation. (p. 192)

The multiplicity of self-concepts or self-images which may contribute to this personal sense of identity were described by Rosenberg (1965), who observed that,

> There are, then, a number of different self-pictures which may be psychologically important to the individual: his present self-image; his committed self-image (the type of person the individual has staked himself on being); the fantasy self-image (the type of person he would like to be if unencumbered by reality); the ego-ideal (the type of person he feels he should be); the future or possible self (the type of person he feels he may become); and the idealized image (the type of person he most enjoys thinking of himself as) [which may include components of his present self, his ego-ideal, his future self, etc.]. (p. 274)

The adolescent's self-concept and formation of an enduring personal sense of identity likely involves components of all of these aspects of self-image. However, the concepts of present self-image and committed self-image are particularly emphasized in measures of identity development such as Marcia's (1964) identity status interviews.

According to Hepworth (1984), Marcia's interview protocol for determining adolescent identity statuses has been the measure most frequently used for identity research. Marcia's (1964) identity status interview is based on Erikson's (1968) concepts of identity formation. It investigates the extent of the adolescent's "active selection among personally meaningful alternatives (crisis)" and "unswerving investment in a course of action (commitment)" (p. 188) in three major areas: occupation, religion and politics. Marcia's instructions for rating the adolescent's responses (p. 188) enable the researcher to label an adolescent as having attained one of four identity statuses. These include "Identity Achieved," for adolescents who have experienced a crisis and made occupational and ideological

commitments; "Identity Foreclosed" describing adolescents who have not experienced a crisis, but demonstrate strong occupational and ideological comments which reflect those of their parents; "Psychosocial Moratorium" for those adolescents who are involved in ongoing crises, and have diffuse commitments; and "Role Diffused" for adolescents who may or may not have experienced a crisis and demonstrate a complete lack of commitment (i.e., they live from day to day). It should be reiterated that the term "crisis" as used by Erikson and Marcia, is conceived of as implying a period of role experimentation and active decision-making among alternative choices, rather than as a period of extreme stress or turmoil.

Recent research studies in the family systems field utilized Marcia's identity status interviews to investigate the relationship between adolescent identity formation and the adolescent-parent relationship (Cooper, Grotwant and Condon, 1983; Grotevant, 1983; Newman & Murray, 1983). Cooper, Grotevant and Condon (1983) evaluated the role of parent-adolescent interactions and family system dynamics in the adolescent's development of effective identity exploration. The authors used a modification of Marcia's (1966) Ego Identity Interview to obtain an identity exploration score for each adolescent. High scores represented adolescents who had actively considered a wide variety of options for themselves in the domains of occupations, religion, politics, friendships, dating and sex roles. The adolescent and his or her entire family was then observed in a Family Interaction task requiring them to make extensive plans for a joint two-week vacation. The families' conversations were coded for communication behaviors that reflected dimensions of a theoretical model of family individuation. Factor analysis of the data revealed four factors consistent with the theoretical formulation: ***self assertion***, displaying clear awareness of the individual's own point of veiw and responsibility for communicating it clearly; ***permeability***, expressing responsiveness to the views of others; ***mutuality***, showing sensitivity and respect for others' views; and ***separateness***, expressing distinctiveness of self from others (Cooper et al., 1983, p. 47). The results showed high identity ratings for adolescents correlating positively with fathers' expressions of mutuality (initiating compromises and stating feelings of others) and separateness (expressing disagreements) from their wives; while low identity exploration,

especially for girls, correlated with mothers' greater permeability (acknowledgements and information sharing). The high exploration adolescents themselves expressed higher levels of separateness (disagreement) and permeability during the family interaction tasks. The authors noted that these findings are consistent with Erikson's (1968) view that identity formation requires both components of separateness, expressing the adolescent's own points of view or sense of self as distinct from others; and permeability or connectedness, which provides a secure base and source of information from which the adolescent can explore the world beyond the family and develop a personal sense of identity.

The need to focus on both individuation and attachment as components of identity formation has been strongly emphasized in studies of women's development (Chodorow, 1974; Gilligan, 1982a). This research suggests that, because mothers are usually the primary caretakers during early childhood, female identity is formed within the context of ongoing relationships (attachment), whereas the formation of masculine gender identity requires separation from the primary love object, or more emphatic individuation. Futhermore, these distinctions appear to result in differing modes of moral reasoning (Gilligan, 1982b); discrepant numbers of interpersonal attachments (Norman, Murphy, Gilligan & Vasudev, 1981) and distinct orientations to power (McClelland, 1975) or achievement motivation (Horner, 1972) for male versus female patterns of normal development. Such evidence of gender-specific characteristics related to the separation-individuation process accentuates the need to examine relationships between both male and female adolescents and their parents in order to obtain an accurate representation of the adolescent-parent separation-individuation process.

Grotevant (1983) described another factor influencing adolescent identity exploration in a study which progressed beyond the analysis of individual communication behaviors to examine overall family relationship factors. Adolescents who were rated highest in identity-exploration were compared with those rated lowest, and results indicated that,

> High-exploring adolescents all participated in an individuated relationship with a parent, one characterized by the co-occurence of separateness and permeability. These families seemed to thrive on exploring their differences, but within the context connectedness. The families of low-exploring adolescents, on the other hand,

> appeared to avoid disagreement and instead expressed high levels of permeability. (Grotevant, 1983, p. 231)

Grotevant (1983) restated the need for the family to accommodate and "manoeuver within the dynamic tension between individuality and connectedness" (p. 235) in assisting the adolescent to develop a sense of identity. He noted, however, that, while observations of family interactions alleviate some of the concerns or limitations inherent in retrospective studies, there is still a need for longitudinal research in this area. Without ongoing, longitudinal data it remains impossible to determine whether and what changes, if any, occur in the family process, the adolescent's personality and identity status, and the adolescent-parent relationship throughout the adolescent years.

Newman and Murray (1983) echoed Grotevant's (1983) call for longitudinal research into adolescent identity development. They further emphasized, however, the importance of a bi-directional and systems approach in this research, so that consideration is given to the interactive and multiplicative effects of each adolescent-parent diad, the marital relationship, and family rules on each family member's identity formation. This approach suggests a system of influences in which the family's patterns of power and decision making may affect the adolescent individuation process, which in turn influences the parents' growth, authority relations, and authority structure within the family, which may subsequently re-influence power and decision-making patterns. Moreover, the direction of influence may reverse at each point in the continuum.

From the research into adolescent self esteem and identity status, then, it becomes increasingly apparent that constructs of normal adolescent development cannot adequately be described in a uni-directional model which does not take into account the numerous and diverse influences on and effects of a process like separation-individuation.

G. Summary

Based on the literature review presented here it appears that a transition occurs in adolescent-parent relationships, involving some separation from childhood dependencies on parental controls or influences concurrent with the development of increased autonomy and

identity formation. The process by which this transition occurs, however, and the variables which may influence the difficulty and outcome of this process, require further investigation. One of the major limitations in previous research on the adolescent separation-individuation process has been the focus on a uni-directional model, considering the adolescent's perceptions and behaviors as a "lone organizer of reality" (Youniss, 1983), separate from the communicative interactions and bi-directional influences of the adolescent-parent relationship.

The observed discrepancies in results of previous research studies may be due at least in part to this omission of the interactive influences of both adolescents and parents throughout the separation-individuation process. For example, previous research with deviant adolescents (in therapy) clearly demonstrated the influence of negative or ambiguous parental expectations on adolescents' inability to achieve normal individuation or separation from the adolescent-parent relationship (Stierlin et al., 1971; Wechter, 1983). Yet no studies were found to have reported measuring parents' perceptions and expectations of their normal adolescent children and how these related to the attainment of a satisfactory separation-individuation process. Previous research which investigated factors such as the extent of value congruence between adolescents and parents, or adolescents' preference for parent versus peer interactions yielded inconsistent results. This may be a reflection of the studies' lack of controls for parental variables such as their expectations, support or parenting styles or adolescent variables such as transitions in cognitive or social skills or differences in male versus female values or moral reasoning. The present study elicited interview data from both parents and adolescents regarding their unique contributions to and perceptions of their inter-relationships in order to provide a more inclusive depiction of the interplay between adolescent and parent variables throughout separation-individuation.

Besides the need to assess adolescent-parent relationships from an interactive or bi-directional approach, there is a further need to examine the influences and contributions of both mothers and fathers as separate individuals. To date, the role of the father in adolescent development has been almost completely ignored, with parental measures usually involving mother alone or a "parent" combination of both mother and father. Yet those studies which

did examine paternal factors separately (Montemayor, 1982; Cooper et al., 1983) clearly demonstrated the influence of the father's behaviors and role within the family on adolescent individuation and identity achievement. The data obtained from interviews with the fathers of adolescents in this study, combined with their teenagers' perceptions and descriptions of them, will therefore provide much needed information regarding the fathers' role in and contributions to adolescent development and the separation-individuation process.

Another common feature of previous research studies which attempted to measure separation-individuation during adolescence was the use of structured, qualitative research instruments developed on the basis of theoretical constructs originating from observations of infant development. The failure of these studies to yield support for their underlying theories suggests the inappropriateness of a wholesale adoption of Mahler's separation-individuation construct and emphasizes the need for a theoretical framework based specifically on adolescent data in order to investigate and understand the nature of separation-individuation during this stage of development. The present research study attempts to address this need via a qualitative investigation of the adolescent-parent relationship for the purpose of obtaining a preliminary exploration and description of the adolescent-parent separation-individuation process. A detailed description of the research focus and methodology used is presented in the following chapter.

III. Research Design

A. Purpose

The purpose of this research was:

1. To provide a thorough investigation and description of the adolescent-parent relationship from the phenomenological perspectives of mothers, fathers and adolescents during early, mid- and late stages of adolescence.
2. To compare the above descriptions in order to assess the presence and nature of a process of adolescent-parent separation-individuation during the period of adolescence.

B. Methodology

A qualitative research design, using a semi-structured interview technique was selected for this study in order to allow for greater personal interpretation and depth of response from the adolescents and parents involved. Much of the previous research investigating variables related to the adolescent-parent relationship utilized pre-structured, quantitative research tools such as rating scales, questionnaires or inventories. It has been primarily in the past decade that researchers have begun to demonstrate careful and detailed scrutiny of the phenomenology of adolescent lives (Josselson et al, 1977a, 1977b; Offer & Offer, 1975; Youniss and Smollar, 1985). The purpose of such scrutiny or inquiry using phenomenological or qualitative methodology is to describe and understand the nature of social life from the perspective of the subject in terms that are personally and functionally relevant to him or her.

Qualitative Research

In order to clarify the purpose and perspective which determined the need for a qualitative investigation of adolescent-parent relationships, some general characteristics and issues pertinent to this style of research are presented.

Objective

The essential goal of qualitative investigation is to provide careful and thorough description and interpretation of a particular research issue from the perspective or frame of reference of the person(s) studied. Qualitative studies are concerned with the internal as well as external realities for human experiences and, as such, attempt to ascertain features of the participants' feelings, patterns of actions, and personal interpretations or explanations of a phenomenon. In comparison with quantitative research – which focuses on empirical and objective analysis of discrete, preselected variables derived from a particular theory to determine measurable relationships among variables – qualitative investigations focus on the description and analysis of perceptions or behavioral patterns, generally within a broader, naturalistic and holistic scope in order to describe and understand the process or phenomenon being investigated. Qualitative research has been described as being less intrusive, in terms of imposing researcher controls or manipulations of people (Leininger, 1985). The qualitative approach was selected for investigating adolescents' relationships with their parents in order to free the participants to respond to any aspects of their interrelations which they considered relevant and which might have been omitted or artificially emphasized with a more structured, quantitative investigation. Concurrent with the advantages inherent in qualitative research design, however, there are special considerations which must be addressed regarding issues such as reliability, generalizability and researcher bias.

Reliability

Qualitative research does not emphasize the replicability measure of research reliability which focuses on consistency of results obtained from observations conducted by different researchers, in varied settings, or at different times. In qualitative studies, the issue of reliability represents a concern with the fit between what is recorded as data and what actually happens in the field. Two researchers studying a setting may come up with different data and produce different findings. Both studies can be reliable. Only if the results obtained from the two studies were contradictory would one question the

reliability of either study.

Generalizability

In conventional use, the term "generalizability" refers to the applicability of the research findings to subjects and settings beyond those in the immediate study. While this is certainly a concern for qualitative research also, the focus is somewhat different. An underlying assumption of qualitative research is that human behavior is not random or idiosyncratic, and the investigative focus consequently is on deriving universal statements about general social processes. The issue of generalizability is therefore not whether, but to which other settings and subjects the results are generalizable. Determining the generalizability of qualitative findings may thus remain beyond the scope of an individual research study. However, the issue can be and is addressed in this study by means of careful descriptions of the sample group and setting used, to allow for comparison or extension by other researchers. As well, the obtained data are assessed in light of other research findings to establish representativeness. Further indications of generalizability could be attained from research replications in a larger number of less-intense mini-studies or quantitative investigations to demonstrate the non-idiosyncratic nature of the results.

Researcher Bias

A particularly salient concern in conducting qualitative research pertains to the extent to which researcher bias or subjectivity influences the results and their interpretation. The researcher's intimate involvement with the subjects during interviews and with the interpretation process of data analysis renders some degree of subjectivity inevitable in this methodology. However, both during the interviews and throughout the analysis of transcripts attempts were made to minimize or limit the influence of such biases. For example, participants were given only general, brief descriptions of the nature of the research inquiry prior to their interviews in order to reduce the influence of the researchers' perceived expectations. Particularly during the initial unstructured inquiry

and continuing throughout the semi-structured interview questions, the interviewer attempted to restrict her comments and questions to further investigation and clarification of points brought out by the participants, in order to avoid interjecting her own opinions or biases in the conversation. While interpreting the transcripts, the researcher repeatedly identified and questioned her own expectations, opinions or prejudices regarding the research and re-evaluated these in light of the evidence presented in the interview transcripts.

Participant Selection

As described under generalizability, qualitative researchers' underlying concern with deriving "universal statements of general social processes rather than statements of commonality between similar settings" (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982) has implications for sample selection. The concern with random selection and representative subject samples predominant in empirical research is generally addressed in qualitative designs by the careful identification and description of selection procedures and characteristics of the research participants. These issues are addressed under **Sample Selection** and **Participants** for the current research.

The Interview Technique

The interview technique for data collection is viewed as ideally suited to descriptive and exploratory studies:

> Information obtained from interviews is particularly useful in providing insights into the discursive nature of social reality. With the possible exception of certain types of observation, perhaps no other type of research tool performs this function as well. Another valuable purpose of the interview is to provide insights into unexplored dimensions of a topic. Regardless of the particular need, whether it be the identification of new variables for study, a sharpening of conceptual clarity, or whatever, the interview can serve as a highly effective exploratory device. (Black & Champion, 1976, p. 357)

The interview technique enables the researcher to explore and interact with the participant in ensuring their mutual understanding and communication regarding the research question. As well, the interview approach enables the researcher to investigate relationships

across a multiplicity of situations and time frames, rather than imposing constraints of setting, circumstances or time frame. This technique was consequently deemed ideally suited to an investigation of the phenomenology and structure of adolescent-parent relationships.

Interview techniques have been used by other researchers investigating adolescent-parent relationships (Josselson et al., 1977a, 1977b; White et al., 1983; Youniss and Smollar, 1985). However, none of these conducted a concurrent assessment of mothers', fathers' and adolescents' views of their interrelationships. In fact, Youniss and Smollar described the inclusion of only adolescent participants as a disadvantage of interviewer research because "descriptions come from only one of the participants in a relationship, and it is not clear that the other participants hold a similar conception, although the assumption is that they do" (1985, p. 17). The present study has addressed this deficiency by including mother, father and adolescent participants for each family in order to evaluate the adolescent-parent relationships and the separation-individuation process from a more inclusive and multidimensional perspective.

Use of the interview technique also introduces disadvantages however. Participants may inadvertently or purposely distort their depiction of reality due to influences like selective memory, social desireability or their personal frame of reference. Once again, the conjoint assessment of all three family members' responses lessened this disadvantage, since perceptual distortions by family members could be assessed from inconsistencies in the three reports. Interestingly, such discrepancies were rare: only in the case of one mid-adolescent father and son were the relationship descriptions markedly incongruous, and the overall responses from this family provided strong evidence of distortion by the father.

The possiblity of family collusion and shared misperceptions may also represent a disadvantage in the use of the interview technique. However, even inaccurate portrayals of interactional content may help to produce an accurate assessment of the meaning and form of the adolescent-parent relationship by demonstrating family rules or expectations which influence interpersonal dynamics like authority structure or intimacy. Conscious exclusion of certain topics could also be possible, but in view of the enthusiastic co-operation of the

subjects, it is deemed unlikely in the present study. The participants' candor in revealing their personal problems, such as alcohol abuse or marital difficulties for parents, or behavioral transgressions and dating concerns for adolescents, suggested the existence of a fairly open, trusting communication with the interviewer.

Sample Selection

Participants were selected from Our Lady of the Angels Junior High School and John Paul II High School in Fort Saskatchewan. These Fort Saskatchewan Catholic schools were selected for this study because of (a) their willingness to assist in sample selection, (b) the fairly broad range of socio-economic levels of families sending their children to these schools, (c) the possibility of including youngsters from both rural and small urban settings in the sample group, and (d) the relatively small population of the schools and community (compared to the Greater Edmonton Area), which ostensibly would enable the school staff to have a more intimate knowledge of a larger segment of the student body and their families.

An initial request to involve the Fort Saskatchewan Catholic schools in this study was presented to the administrator and school board members, who were informed of the purpose of the study and shown a copy of the research proposal. They agreed to ask each school's counsellor to draft lists of ten male and ten female potential adolescent volunteers for each of the three age groups.

The school principals and counsellors were contacted and informed both verbally and in writing of the nature and purpose of the research, and were given guidelines for the selection of subjects.

School counsellors were asked to identify potential participants for the study using the following criteria:

1. Families that might be willing to volunteer for the study.
2. Two-parent families with both mother and father living at home.
3. Families with "normal" or "average" adolescents (specifically, adolescents with no history of delinquency, institutionalization or failed years at school), in order to counter the

over-emphasis on deviant or delinquent adolescents in previous studies.

4. Selection categories:
   a. 10 families with a male child aged 12-14 years (grades 6-8)
   b. 10 families with a female child aged 12-14 years (grades 6-8)
   c. 10 families with a male child aged 15-17 years (grades 9-11)
   d. 10 families with a female child aged 15-17 years (grades 9-11)
   e. 10 families with a male child aged 18-20 years (grade 12 to two years after high school)
   f. 10 families with a female child aged 18-20 years (grade 12 to two years after high school)

An attempt to further select for only first-born adolescents in order to control for the effects of birth order was subsequently abandoned as it rendered the selection process excessively cumbersome.

Subsequent to providing the requested lists of names, one of the counsellors noted that he had further interpreted the request for "normal" adolescents as meaning adolescents whom he considered "well-adjusted, nice, well-rounded, and involved kids, but not really outstanding at either end of the scale in behaviors." That is, not real "problems," but also not real "goodies," (meaning youngsters who were outstanding or unusual in their positive behaviors). This counsellor's comments suggest that additional selection criteria were applied to exclude adolescents who might fall into descriptive categories like most popular, best athlete or highest academic achiever, as well as those who might demonstrate very poor academic or social adjustment.

Based on the self-reported overall academic averages (see Appendix F) of the adolescents in this study, however, it does appear that the selected sample represents a group of above-average adolescents at least in terms of academic achievement. In summary, although the selection criteria used here served to identify only a very broad definition of the term "normal" as applied in this study, they appeared to reflect a common understanding of acceptable "normal" limits, which excluded deviant extremes at either end of a scale of

adaptive behaviors.

A brief description of the proposed research and the interviewer's and research supervisor's names, addresses and phone numbers were sent out to all parents by means of school newsletters to indicate the school board's co-operation with the study and prepare the way for individual interview requests. Initial contacts were made by telephone, usually to one of the parents. The interviewer identified herself, her affiliation with the university and briefly reiterated the nature and purpose of the study. The family member was informed that volunteers for the study would be asked to take part in individual, personal interviews at their convenience, either in their own home or at the University of Alberta. Families were informed of the specific time requirements and were asked to discuss the research among themselves prior to volunteering, to ensure that all family members were interested and willing to co-operate in the study.

The response to these telephone requests for volunteers was exceptionally good in all but one of the six subgroups. Two volunteers were obtained in each subgroup, usually from the first two calls made or from three families contacted at most. With the subgroup of mid-adolescent males, however, a total of seven families was contacted before two willing volunteers were obtained. Furthermore, the fathers in both of these two families disclosed that they had experienced long-term difficulties with alcohol abuse in the past but had stopped or reduced their drinking in the last one to two years.

In order to control for the possible effects of a drinking problem, a third family with a mid-adolescent male was subsequently solicited for inclusion in the study. However, interviews with this family revealed that the father suffered from a medical difficulty which had affected his communication skills and had resulted in a significant drop in employment level. As well, this family was constantly faced with the possibility that the father's medical condition could deteriorate at any time.

An attempt was subsequently made to add yet another family to the mid-adolescent male subgroup, however the constraints of this family's summer vacation and the time line for this study precluded its inclusion. It was decided therefore to proceed with the obtained

sample of three mid-adolescent males' families, particularly in light of evidence that the incidence of drinking problems in the overall sample reflected estimates of the rate of alcoholism in the general population.

According to the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission (1983), the Ledermann Model for estimating incidence of alcoholism in the general population yielded an expectation of 267,000 problem drinkers in Alberta in 1985, or about 15% of the drinking age population. Based on this statistic, the presence of alcohol abuse problems in two out of 12 families (16.7% of families or 8.3% of all parents) selected appears reasonably representative of the incidence of alcoholism in the general population. However, the need to cope with a serious drinking or health problem within a family can reasonably be presumed to influence the nature of the adolescent-parent interactions and relationship. Since both families with problem drinkers were selected for the mid-adolescent male sample, results for this subgroup might yield a distorted view of mid-adolescent males' relations with their parents due to biases introduced by the alcohol problems.

Due to the described characteristics of the subgroup of mid-adolescent males and their families, the representativeness of this group may be questioned. Although random sampling of subjects was not possible, the selected group of participants does appear to reflect a reasonably representative sample of middle-class, white families with "normal" adolescents aged 12 to 19 years.

Participants

The interview sample of 39 participants in this study was comprised of thirteen adolescents ranging in age from 12 to 19 years, their mothers, and their fathers. Four adolescents (two males and two females) were initially selected for each of three age groups (early, mid-, and late adolescence). Some previous researchers have distinguished only two major subgroups in the adolescent period; early and late adolescence (Marcia, 1966; Newman & Newman, 1979). However, considerable evidence to support the description of three separate stages of adolescence, each with its own distinctive characteristics and tasks has been

provided by theorists like Blos (1979), Mitchell (1986), and Sullivan (1953). Consequently, the age groups of early (age 12-14 years), mid- (age 15-17 years) and late (age 18-20 years) were used in the present study. These were further divided by sex of the adolescent to yield a total of six subgroups, with two subjects in each subgroup namely, early adolescent males, early adolescent females, mid-adolescent males, mid-adolescent females, late adolescent males, and late adolescent females.

During their interviews, both fathers in the subgroup of mid-adolescent males disclosed that they had experienced long-term problems with alcohol abuse in the past. Due to the possible effects this might impose on the parent-child relationship, a third teenager and his parents were selected for inclusion in this subgroup as described under **Sample Selection**. Consequently, a total sample of 13 teenagers, 13 fathers and 13 mothers were interviewed.

All participating families belonged to the Roman Catholic religion, although the degree of involvement in the church or religious activities of individual family members varied from practically none to regular weekly attendance with extensive voluntary service. Most of the parents interviewed were asked about the extent to which they felt that their religion had influenced how they raised their families. The majority replied that their personal value system or experiences from their families of origin exerted greater influence than dictates of their religion. Belief in some religion or belief in God were cited by several participants as an important factor in imparting values and raising children. As well, involvement in the Catholic school system was mentioned by some parents as influential on their children's upbringing due to the smaller, more intimate school population size presumably allowing for more attention and commitment from the teaching staff. However, from the perspective of most parents participating in this study, their chosen religious affiliation was not generally considered a major determinant of child rearing practices or adolescent-parent relationships.

Indications that religious orientation may influence relationship variables for adolescents and parents have, however, been observed in some previous research studies. For example, significantly higher mean rankings of values like "salvation" and "forgiving," and greater overall value convergence was demonstrated by a predominantly Baptist sample of

mothers and daughters (Barclay and Shap, 1982), than was described in a similar study (Feather, 1973) utilizing a more heterogenous group with respect to religious affiliation. Generalizations from the results of the present study consequently may be restricted to families espousing the Catholic faith. Further investigation and research with non-Catholic sample groups is required to determine broader generalizability of these findings.

All participating families also represent intact, two-parent homes, with both mother and father residing primarily with the family, although three fathers travelled and resided away from their families for periods of a few days up to several months in the course of their jobs. However, all of these fathers reported that their time spent living away from home had been reduced dramatically or completely in the past year. Consequently all but one of the adolescents and parents in this study had regular if not daily opportunities to interact with one another. The exception to this involved a late adolescent male who resided in Edmonton from September to May in order to attend univeristy. This participant was re-interviewed, at his own request, following his return home for summer holidays, in order to discuss changes in his perceived relationship with his father after he moved back home.

Family size ranged from 2 to 5 children with an overall mean of 3.54 children per family. None of the sample group had extended-family members, like grandparents, or non-family members residing in their home. Verbal interactions between adolescents and parents were conducted in English and usual Canadian customs and traditions were followed in all participants' homes. Thus, no major influences from other cultures or ethnic backgrounds were evident, although the participants did embrace minor influences from other countries in the ethnic foods or holiday traditions they enjoyed. The ethnic background for the majority of families was European or British.

Mothers' ages ranged from 31 to 43 years, with an overall mean age of 39.7 years and mean ages for mothers of early, mid-, and late adolescents of 38.5 years, 40.6 years and 40 years respectively. Fathers' ages ranged from 31 to 48 years with an overall mean age of 41.48 years and mean ages for fathers of early, mid-, and late adolescents of 39 years, 41.2 years and 44.25 years respectively.

All fathers were employed full-time in jobs ranging from labour and skilled trades to sales, industrial supervision and professions like engineering and teaching. Fathers' educational levels ranged from grade 10 with a technical institute diploma, to high school graduation to university graduation and a post-graduate degree. Four of the fifteen mothers in the total sample were full-time homemakers, while five were employed full-time in clerical, teaching or nursing occupations, and four others worked part-time at salesclerk, waitressing or clerical jobs. Mothers' educational levels ranged from grade nine graduation, to high school plus technical or business training, to university graduation and post-graduate work.

Environmental demographics must also be considered in describing the selected research sample. The 12,500 residents of Fort Saskatchewan constitute a particularly stable community in terms of historical background, economic viability and lack of resident transience. The area around the present city of Fort Saskatchewan saw its first settlers in the early 1870's and the original R.C.M.P. Fort was established in 1884. Fort Saskatchewan became a village in 1898 and was proclaimed a city in 1985. Excellent employment opportunities and the proximity of a major urban center can be seen as contributing to the growth of this community. Major employers within Fort Saskatchewan and surrounding areas include large industrial plants (Sherrit Gordon, Dow Chemical and Esso Chemical near Redwater), the Fort Saskatchewan Correctional Center and numerous oil refineries. Fort Saskatchewan's proximity to the city of Edmonton provides further employment opportunities as well as easy access to numerous other amenities. Residents of Fort Saskatchewan cite the accessibility to the large urban center's services and facilities, without the major disadvantages of conjestion, traffic problems and higher crime rates, as a significant attraction of their community. The community is also seen as very family-oriented, with numerous recreational services and annual events for adults and children, and a strong interest in organized community sports activities like hockey, baseball and soccer for boys, while girls tend to be more involved in school league sports.

Breakdowns of the total school age population in the Fort Saskatchewan area show approximately 40% of students attending Catholic schools and 60% attending Protestant

schools. Of the two Catholic schools involved in the present research, Our Lady of the Angel's school has a population of 270 students in grades one through eight, with 144 of these students in junior high school, or grades seven and eight. Seventy students travel to this school from surrounding areas. John Paul II school accommodates 290 students in grades nine through 12, including 40 to 50 out-of-county students. Both schools offer primarily academic programs and both report limited transience of the student population (In John Paul II there is an approximate turnover of ten students per year for all grades combined.). Thus, the great majority of the students in these two catholic schools spend their educational years from grades one to twelve with the same group of classmates and peers.

Summary

The participant sample for this research was selected from a relatively small and stable, family-and-sports-oriented city. The adolescent participants generally maintained a consistent peer group throughout their school years due to the small school populations and low student turnover. Their parents represent a fairly diverse range of educational and occupational attainments, but the socioeconomic status of the sample would be considered middle-class overall. All families in the sample represented intact, two-parent Roman Catholic homes with between two and five children per family. All participants were white, English speaking and of European or British extraction. Any interpretations or generalizations of the results obtained from this study must be examined in light of these sample characteristics.

C. Procedure

Following receipt of consent to interview via the initial telephone contacts, appointments were arranged with each family member, rotating the order in which the various family members were interviewed. All interviews were conducted by the writer, in the period from March to July, 1986. Each parent interview lasted approximately two hours, and each adolescent was interviewed on two occasions for durations averaging about two hours and one hour respectively. One late adolescent male was given a third one-half hour interview, at his

own request, to update and expand on some of his responses from his first interview two months earlier. He had been living away from home to attend university in Edmonton and reported that he had experienced significant changes in his relationship with his father after returning home for the summer holidays. The first two interviews with this participant were conducted in a counselling room at the University of Alberta Education Clinic, while the third was conducted in his home. The university's Education Clinic was also the interview site for all three members of one early adolescent female's family, whereas all other interviews were conducted in the participants' homes. Privacy was maintained by assuring that no person other than the respondent and interviewer was in the room at the time of interviewing. Each participant was given a brief introduction to the nature and importance of the study both verbally and in writing (see Appendix A), and was asked for written consent for audiotaping of interviews. All interviews were recorded on audiotape and later transcribed.

The order in which family members were interviewed was varied throughout the sample. As well, the order in which adolescents were asked to discuss their relationships with their mother or father was systematically reversed within each subgroup.

As described under **Methodology**, the initial interview enquiry for both parents and adolescents constituted an unstructured phenomenological description of the adolescent-parent relationship. Specific variables which were considered relevant to a separation-individuation process in adolescence were identified from a review of previous research. Further investigation of these variables was incorporated in semi-structured interview questions designed to elicit descriptions of the following elements of adolescent-parent relationships: parental discipline, expectations and helping strategies; adolescents' problem disclosures, peer relations, role modelling, identity status (using Marcia's 1964, Identity Status Interview); interpersonal conflicts, shared activities, relationship evaluation and perceived transitions. The selected questions were administered to one pilot family, following which revisions and additions were made. Separate forms for interviewing adolescents and parents were developed and continually adapted or adjusted throughout the interviewing process. Appendices C and D represent the approximate format for parent and adolescent interviews respectively.

D. Data Analysis

A major disadvantage of qualitative research is the often cumbersome and difficult task of data analysis. The extensive and rich data obtained from participant interviews can result in innumerable discrete, unsystematic theoretical formulations. For the present research, a total of 92 hours of interviews resulted in 920 pages of single-spaced typewritten interview transcripts. This mass of data threatened to overwhelm the research process and the researcher with a wealth of ideas and interpretational possibilities. The applicaton of Mahler's separation-individuation construct provided a valuable organizational focus within which these discrete formulations could be examined. However, an interpretive process was still needed for the distillation and comparison of central themes relevant to this construct from the individual interview comments of mothers, fathers and adolescents. A phenomenological analysis of the inital unstructured interview questions was therefore conducted to derive central concepts for further investigation, and to establish the participants' phenomenological perspective of the adolescent-parent relationship at each stage of adolescence. A further investigation of the themes thus elicited included the analysis of the parent-adolescent relationships from a structural perspective (Piaget, 1965; Sullivan 1953; Youniss and Smollar, 1985) in order to identify and describe the adolescent-parent separation-individuation process on the basis of developmental changes in interactional structures between parents and their children. The following sections contain details of the phenomenological and structural analyses undertaken.

The assessment of the adolescents' identity statuses utilizing Marcia's Identity Status Interview (1964, p. 184) was incorporated as part of the adolescent interview questionnaire. The adolescents' responses to these questions were rated independently by the researcher and one other psychologist, each using Marcia's descriptive Manual for rating identity status tapes (p. 186-201). Ratings of Identity Achieved, Foreclosed, Moratorium or Identity Diffused (or a combination of two of these categories) were determined for each adolescent based on a consensus of the two raters. Where there was no consensus initially, subsequent discussion of the ratings resulted in mutual agreement on the identity status ratings for all adolescents.

Phenomenological Analysis

The phenomenological analysis of adolescents' and parents' unstructured descriptions of their interrelationships parallelled the process outlined by Giorgi (1975):

> (1) The researcher read the entire description of the adolescent-parent relationship straight through to get a sense of the whole. (2) Next, the researcher read the same description more slowly delineating each time that a transition in meaning was perceived with respect to the intention of discovering the nature of the adolescent-parent relationship. This procedure produced a series of meaning units or constituents. (3) The researcher then eliminated redundancies and clarified or elaborated the meaning of the units just constituted by relating them to each other and to the sense of the whole. (4) The researcher reflected on the given units, still expressed essentially in the concrete language of the subject, and described the essence of that situation for the subject with respect to the nature of the adolescent-parent relationship. Each unit was systematically interrogated for what it revealed about the adolescent-parent relationship for that subject. The central themes or concepts evolving at this point were compared across participants to yield the organizational focus of relationship factors to be examined. (5) The researcher synthesized and integrated the insights achieved into consistent descriptions of the nature of the adolescent-parent relationship for each adolescent subgroup. Combined with a structural analysis of interactional patterns at each stage, these formulations provided a description of the nature of a separation-individuation process during adolescence.

Organizational topics elicited from the phenomenological analyses included: A) adolescent-parent interactions: shared activities, verbal communication and conflicts; B) parental influences: parenting style and parental expectations; C) adolescent influences: cognitive development and peer relationships; and D) inter-relationship transitions. An examination of topics for each of the six adolescent subgroups constitutes the interview results presented in chapter IV.

Structural Analysis

A structural approach in the form of that described by Youniss (1980) and Youniss and Smollar (1985) was applied to the analysis and interpretation of the interview transcripts. The underlying premise for analyzing relationships from a structural perspective was derived from the theoretical formulations of Piaget ([1932], 1965) and Sullivan (1953). Both Piaget and Sullivan theorized that personal development occured within the context of interpersonal relationships, and that individuals tend to conceptually organize their interpersonal interactions into relational structures. These structures provide the individuals with a sense of

continuity from one interaction to another, guiding the perception of past events and determining the expectation or direction of ongoing or future events.

The particular structure of any interpersonal relationship is not necessarily determined by the specific content of the interactions, rather it evolves from consistencies in the form of the interactions and their meaning to the participants. An excellent example of this was provided by Youniss and Smollar (1985) discussing Youniss' (1980) findings regarding pre-adolescent parent-child relationships:

> Two sequences depict the ideal typical form of parent-child relations. One is: request (expectation) – obedience – approval. The other is: request – disobedience – disapproval – obedience – approval. These sequences, which children described for us in their own accounts of everyday interactions with parents, imply for Piaget and Sullivan a structure called unilateral authority. This means that parents know how children should act and that they want children to learn the desired behavior. It means also that children acknowledge their parents' authority and take a position that is complementary to it. (p. 2)

As can be seen from the above example, it is by means of examining, describing and classifying interpersonal interactions that the structure of the interpersonal relationship may become known to the outside observer and researcher.

According to Hinde (1979), any science of interpersonal relationships must rest on a sound basis of description and classification, the ultimate purpose of this description being the identification of differences in relationships. Hinde identified two main kinds of differences which must be examined in an attempt to develop a science of interpersonal relationships. The first is the identification of differences between "gross classes of relationships" (p. 41) such as parent-child versus peer-peer relationships. It is into this category that Youniss and Smollar's (1985) study of adolescent relations falls. The second involves "finer differences between relationships within those gross categories – how does this mother-child relationship differ from that, for example" (p. 40). The present study can be located in this second group with a focus on describing and identifying differences and similarities between individual mother-adolescent and father-adolescent relationships, as well as comparing the parent-child relationships across the stages of early, mid- and late adolescence. As such, this research provides a valuable counterpart to studies like those of Greenberg et al (1983) and Youniss and Smollar (1985), which look at broad classes of adolescent relationships with parents and

peers or friends. The present research utilizes a structural analysis of adolescent and parent interview responses to provide another perspective on the nature and form of interpersonal relationships developed during adolescence and on their relevance in understanding adolescent development and the separation-individuation process.

IV. Results

In Chapter IV, information obtained from the adolescent and parent participants in this study is summarized for each of the six major subgroups, comprised of early, mid-, late, and male or female adolescents. As part of the initial phenomenological analysis of the introductory interview question (asking each participant to describe their adolescent-parent relationship and its development), recurrent issues or topics were extracted from the interview transcripts. These subsequently provided an organizational structure for describing major characteristics of the adolescent-parent relationships for each subgroup. Utilizing the assumption that an understanding of relationships as structures can contribute to theories that address either the dynamics or the results of these relationships (Youniss & Smollar, 1985), the obtained descriptions were assessed for consistencies in form as well as content and were evaluated in the context of an adolescent-parent separation-individuation process. The specific topics or subheadings addressed in this section include (a) adolescent-parent interactions: shared activities, verbal communication, and conflicts; (b) parental influences: parenting style and parental expectations; (c) adolescent influences: cognitive development and peer relationships; and (d) inter-relationship transitions.

A. Early Adolescent Males

1. Adolescent-Parent Interactions

Shared Activities

An outstanding feature of the two adolescent males' phenomenological descriptions of their relationships with both parents was the extent to which they considered shared activities to constitute the essence of that relationship.[1] This was particularly evident in contrast to the older adolescents who talked about verbal

[1]Barry B., aged 12 years (all names are changed) for example, stated "(We're) buddies, yeah we have a good time ... (I) tell her jokes, play catch in the back yard and play board games."

interactions or affective features of the relationships and relegated shared activities to a much less central role.

The parents of both early adolescent males demonstrated a far more multi-dimensional perspective of the relationship than their sons, but focused on shared activities as the vehicle through which they often attained influence or control in their sons' lives.

An interchange with Barry's father illustrates this point:

> Mr. B.: Primarily I try to lead him by showing him rather than telling him. I have some values and if I show them to him, I believe they'll be – he'll observe them. That's really the whole thing in a nutshell.
> Interviewer: Can you expand a little bit for me on how you show rather than tell when you're helping him?
> Mr. B.: Okay. My dealings with other people – there's nothing secretive around here and I like to include him as much as I can. He's going to pick up how I do that. And the same as in sports. I go with him, so that he'll pick it up. I think if I was sneaky, he would end up being sneaky. I don't know how to explain that, but ...
> Interviewer: Sounds like you're saying you try to set a good example.
> Mr. B.: Yeah, if you set a good example and he looks and sees that you are successful, which I feel I am, then he's going to do the same thing.

This father clearly viewed time spent in shared activities as an opportunity to impart a value system more effectively than through verbal communication. Other parents described using activities as a means to facilitate communication by diverting some of the tension or self-consciousness of personal discussions, or as a way to focus their son's energies in a desirable direction. The importance of shared activities as the medium for adolescent-parent interactions in this subgroup was also underscored by the two boys' apparent lack of awareness of much of their parents' reported verbal input, as described in the section on verbal communication.

According to the parents' and adolescents' comments, their shared activities and communications took a largely asymmetrical form, in the terms of Youniss and Smollar (1985). Even with activities involving mutual interactions, like playing catch or board games, the parents' tendency to use activities as a means for imparting values, skills or ideas would transform the outwardly symmetrical interactions into an asymmetrical, teacher and pupil type of involvement. Mothers were more often involved in sharing

instrumental interactions (like shopping or doing homework) than fathers, who were almost exclusively associated with recreational activities like fishing, camping, sports, playing catch or skiing. Mothers were also involved in some recreational activities like playing catch and swimming or as chauffeurs and spectators for their sons' sports activities, and were described as sharing activities overall more frequently than fathers.

In summary, for the early-adolescent males and their parents, shared activities represented a major element of the adolescent-parent relationship. The overall form of these activities or interactions indicates a continuation of a system of complementary reciprocity in which the parent retains the power to take charge of the interactions, as described by Youniss (1980) in his observations of preadolescent children, and the adolescent implicitly concedes this unilateral authority. There is little evidence of any change in the form of shared activities between these parents and early adolescents from that which Youniss described for parents and latency-aged children. At the outset of the adolescent separation-individuation process for these two boys then, there appears to be a continuity from earlier stages such that a form of interactional symbiosis could be said to extend into the early adolescent stage.

Verbal Communication

A marked discrepancy was evident in the early male adolescents' and parents' phenomenological descriptions of verbal communications between them. The verbal interactions between the two early adolescent boys and their parents included general reports of the day's activities, good-natured joking, and discussion of mutual interests. Their parents, while agreeing on the presence of these informal aspects of shared communications, described other, more instrumental and symmetrical interactions as well. The parents perceived themselves as more likely to provide verbal explanations and interpretations of their actions or of daily events, and they emphasized listening to and trying to understand their sons' opinions and concerns as well. There would appear to be very little justification for parents to fabricate these perceptions, thus it is reasonable to assume that the adolescent boys simply did not recognize or incorporate these forms of

verbal communication as significant components of the adolescent-parent relationship. One possible explanation for this might be the attained level of cognitive development for this age group. Piaget's (1972) stage of concrete operational thought extends to the beginning of the age identified as early adolescence in this study, or preadolescence in Piaget's terms. Thus these youngsters may be demonstrating their inability to "disconnect" their thought processes from concrete objects or experiences – a characteristic of the concrete thinker which would render hypothetical or relativistic verbal communication or explanations ineffective at best.

Both early adolescent males and their parents identified the topic of school problems as the major concern shared by the boys, although sports, bike repairs or peer relations might also be discussed. Topics which were occasionally avoided included those which the adolescent perceived as uninteresting to their parents (shopping for dad) or for which a negative response was anticipated (fighting with friends was not discussed with mom and poor grades were withheld from dad). Friends were not preferred for problem disclosure by either adolescent. In fact, friends were utilized only to discuss minor concerns or family difficulties where no solution or response was required beyond an outlet for their grievances. One of the early adolescent males had older siblings and indicated that they were sometimes preferred as confidants over parents and friends. His report is extremely interesting in view of the fact that the role of older siblings as important transitional objects or catalysts for the adolescent separation-individuation process has been almost completely neglected in the adolescent literature. This concept will be examined further through the discussions of subsequent sub-groups in this study.

The type of assistance sought from parents generally involved a "how to do something" request, which implies a relational structure in which the parent is seen as an expert or authority with skills and knowledge that are beyond the present realm of the adolescents' abilities. Both mothers and fathers utilized similar helping strategies in response to these requests: first attempting to motivate and encourage the adolescents to find their own solution; next guiding them via opinions or suggestions and, failing that,

teaching, directing or demonstrating the correct solution.

In general, the early adolescent males' verbal interactions with their parents – including withholding information that might invoke parental disapproval, and seeking parental directives and guidance for difficulties – are reminiscent of the interactional forms observed by Youniss (1980) in his description of the parent-preadolescent relationship structure involving parents' unilateral authority and the norm of complementary reciprocity. That is, the pre-adolescents consistently engaged in sequential interactions with parents in which they exchanged obedience on their part for approval from the parents.

An expected continuity in the adolescent-parent relationship structure can thus be observed from the pre-adolescent period described by Youniss (extending up to age 12) to the twelve year-old early adolescent males in this study. Perhaps a minor progression from that younger group can be observed in the comments of one of the boys from the present study, who indicated that he would prefer to use his father's advice over his mother's because his dad "is smarter" and mom's advice "sort of backfires" sometimes. This youngster's ability to assess and evaluate his mother as a "less-than-perfect" individual whose guidance can be faulty represents a change from the omniscient, omnipotent parents described by Youniss's younger sample. This ability to view the parent in a less-idealized and more critical light may represent a first step in the adolescent-parent separation-individuation process. The symbiosis implicit in the pre-adolescents' ultimate acceptance of their parents' authority and superiority begins to become differentiated in this more critical and analytical evaluation of the parent as a person. The beginning of this differentiation phase, as identified by changes in the form of verbal interactions, shows the adolescent described above using the two parents in reference to each other. Mahler's description of differentiation as a turning to "other than mother" with checks back to her as a familiar base, became for one early adolescent youngster a comparison of mother's versus father's traits and advice, with the mother's perceived shortcomings forming some justification in her son's mind for loosening his

dependency on her ego support and control.

Conflict

The phenomenological descriptions of adolescent-parent relationships contained very little reference to interpersonal conflict for this subgroup. The reason for this was clarified when the participants were asked to describe the frequency of arguments between them and usual topics or issues which resulted in disagreements. All of the responses given included either a statement that conflicts occurred very rarely or that they were instigated by minor or unimportant events. For parents the most common irritations reported were adolescents' untidiness and their squabbles with siblings. Common conflicts expressed by the two boys included feeling that parents did not support them in disagreements with siblings and differing opinions about how to do things like repairs or schoolwork. Adolescents and parents reported that they agreed on issues or values that they considered "major" or "important," like school and kindness to others. As well, the adolescents expressed a desire to emulate their parents' skills or personality traits like patience, responsibility, humor and intelligence. The adolescents wished to be different from their parents in more superficial or concrete characteristics like clothes consciousness, athletic activities, career aspirations and desire to travel. In some cases these desired changes actually represented further value congruence between adolescent and parent because they also reflected the parents' hopes for their children. As one father stated regarding his son, "I think he'd like to be maybe smarter – he's talking about being a lawyer or something like that. It's a different trade, but it's really been what I've sort of been pushing him at. More of the professional trades."

For the early adolescent males and their parents, then, there appears to be an overall low degree of conflict and discord in the relationship, with general consensus on issues or values which are considered important. This finding is consistent with the view of a relational structure in which the parent is accorded a role of unilateral authority such that misbehavior or discord would be avoided by the adolescent. Barry's introductory comments about his parents illustrated this need to avoid conflict in order to maintain a

good relationship with them. Regarding his mother he said, "We get along good except for two nights ago my supper was ruined. If I don't get home on time, no supper." His relationship with his father was seen as "Okay, (but) he gets mad at me sometimes whenever I do something wrong, but other than that it is basically the same thing like my mom."

These early adolescents thus appear to be maintaining a strong identification with their parents and containing their rebellion or rejection of parental norms or controls within limits and areas that are generally sanctioned by or acceptable to the parents. The two boys certainly did not demonstrate any evidence of major emotional turmoil or rebellion against parents at this stage, but the gradual "testing of waters" in defining themselves differently from their parents and tentatively challenging parental opinions actually could be seen as reflecting elements of Mahler's differentiation subphase. The adolescents' ability to assess both mother and father as different-from-self, at least on minor characteristics or opinions, represents the beginnings of ego differentiation with an evaluation of the love object as separate from self. This progression must be viewed in perspective, however – the early male adolescents described here remained overwhelmingly "connected" to their parents in opinions and conformity in spite of these minor advances in differentiation.

2. Parental Influences

Parental Expectations

Parental expectations can be organized into process versus outcome goals and adolescent versus parental-based determinants of success. For the early adolescent males, a combination of both process and outcome expectations were identified. Adolescents saw their parents as being primarily concerned with academic achievement and effort. Parents agreed that good grades and academic effort were important to them, but also emphasized more abstract process concepts like respect and concern for others, honesty and "right values." Overall, determination of goals or expectations for the adolescents was based on

the parents' definition of acceptable performance. Adolescents appeared quite prepared to abide by their parents' expectations and indicated that they usually considered themselves successful in doing so. The parents also indicated that their sons were successful in meeting their expectations, although both mothers expressed caution regarding the likelihood of future success, alluding to possible peer influences as a source of concern.

Although the parents were generally reluctant to accept redefinition of their expectations by the adolescents, one father did express a willingness to adjust his own high expectations for his son, as illustrated by the following comments:

> Interviewer: What do you think down the road, do you think Charles will meet your expectations?
> Mr. C.: Oh yeah. Easily. They can be adjusted too. I have to be reasonable.
> Interviewer: So between the two of you, you're going to meet somewhere down the road.
> Mr. C.: We'll meet (laugh). Sure, we'll meet. Guaranteed.

Even in this case, however the adolescent's role in determining the success of his accomplishments remained passive rather than active. At this stage, adolescents exerted and were given very little influence in evaluating or determining the appropriateness of parental expectations.

The parents in this subgroup, when asked what determines when a child becomes "grown-up" in their opinions, all responded with the general concepts of independence from parents (in financial, emotional and decision-making areas) and responsibility for their own behavior. The parents rated the two early adolescent males as beginning to move more towards being grown-up, but also as still regressing to childish behavior at times. Charles' parents rated him as "very mature" compared to his age group, whereas Barry's parents indicated that "he needs greater maturity" and "it will be a long time before he's classed as an adult in my finishing category." However, all four parents expressed a conviction that their sons would ultimately attain this level of maturity and would achieve shifts in object relations (to marital partnerships) as adults.

As to their own anticipated response to their child's departure from the parental home, the two couples described somewhat different reactions. Charles' parents were unreservedly enthusiastic and encouraging of their first born son's anticipated move to

independent living and foresaw few resultant changes in their own lifestyle, other than possibly more time for other things. Barry's parents, on the other hand, mentioned loneliness and a sense of loss at the thought of their youngest child leaving home. For this couple, their son's inevitable departure was associated with thoughts of retirement, aging, grandchildren, and transitions in their marital relationship.

For the two families interviewed, the departure of a youngest child was seen to elicit more negative associations to mid-life transitions and object loss than was the case with the oldest child. The fact that the family with the youngest offspring perceived the son to be rather immature for his age, whereas the other family viewed their son as advanced in maturity suggests a possible influence on the separation-individuation process. This observation is consistent with suggestions by Bloom (1980) and Stierlin et al (1971) of a self-fulfilling prophecy in which parents' expectations regarding consequences of separation-individuation influenced the adolescents' readiness for independence.

Apart from this evidence of a possible deceleration of the separation-individuation process in one family, however, all other measures of parental perceptions and expectations regarding their son's development were consistently positive. Stierlin et al's (1971) observations of parents' separation-inhibiting or ambiguous perceptions of character defects in deviant adolescents were noteably absent for the participants in this subgroup. In most cases the parents of the two early male adolescents could be seen as facilitating or allowing the adolescents' aspirations for increased autonomy, but also as encouraging or orchestrating the development of a "correct" process within which this should occur. Once again, a system of complementary reciprocity is evident in the parent's power to determine or control the adolescent's behavior by administering or withholding approval or consent.

Parenting Style

The predominant style of parenting was evidenced in large extent in the subjective impressions gleaned by the interviewer. Reflections of fondness or tolerance in parents' expressions as they described their children were not always evident in verbation

transcripts, so that the strong sense of affective concern and support shown by all of the parents who participated in this study is difficult to demonstrate solely from the verbal content of the interviews. For the early adolescent male subgroup, some evidence of the parents' sensitivity and response to their sons' views or needs, as well as a willingness to permit age-appropriate independence, was demonstrated in comments by Barry's mother and father:

> Mr. B.: It's not just Barry, it's all the kids. You've got to be there for them, but you've got to back away and let them go too. Ah ... as long as he knows we're here, he's going to grow on his own at his own speed, in fact, if I have to purposefully stand back and let him grow his own wings. At the same time, when he makes a mistake, you've got to be able to sit down and talk about it, but without getting all upset. As soon as you get all upset, he's going to say "the heck with you" and close his mind.
>
> Mrs. B.: I let Barry try and think it out too, himself, because I feel they have to. If we do all the talking for them, they're not going to learn anything. You know what I mean? You have to kind of sit back and watch them make the wrong decisions.

A predominantly authoritative (democratic) parenting style is evident in these statements as well as from the overall interview impressions. However, as noted from Table 1 on page 72, early adolescents as a group were more likely to describe their parents as administering coercive or restrictive punishments than were mid- or late adolescents. As well, early adolescents did not perceive the use of verbal explanation or discussion which their parents reported using as a form of discipline. Table 2 shows that adolescents in the early group generally received fewer verbal rewards than did mid- or late adolescents, and parents of early adolescents were less likely to describe their system of rewards as not being contingent on specific adolescent behaviors or achievements.

In summary, the overall parenting style used for the early adolescent males, while exhibiting a tendency towards authoritative interactions, remains markedly authoritarian in some contexts. The parents allowed their sons some independence and decision-making powers but only in those areas which were deemed "not important" or not potentially damaging to their child. Parents in this subgroup retained more active control over their children by means of contingent and concrete rewards and punishments than did parents with older adolescents.

Table 1

Types of Punishment Reported by Adolescents, Mothers, and Fathers

Types of Punishment	Number of Participants Reporting Use of Punishment:											
	Early Adolescent Families (N=4)				Mid-Adolescent Families (N=5)				Late Adolescent Families (N=4)			
	adol.[1] re: mother	adol. re: father	mother's self-report	father's self-report	adol. re: mother	adol. re: father	mother's self-report	father's self-report	adol. re: mother	adol. re: father	mother's self-report	father's self-report
1. Verbal – explanation/lecture			1	3	4	3	2	2	2	2	2	3
– yelling or scolding		1	1			1	1	4	1	2	3	2
– threats (not carried out)		1	1	1		2	1		3	1	1	
2. Removing priveleges/grounding	2	2	3	2	1	2	3	1				
3. Time out (sent to room, or chair)	2	2	2	1		1						
4. Physical (spanking)		1										
5. Showing disappointment				1		1				1		1
6. Withdrawal ("silent treatment" or avoiding each other)					1				1	2		1
7. Extra work	1											
8. Leave responsibility for punishment to spouse	1			1				1		1		

[1]adol. = adolescent

Table 2

Types of Rewards Reported by Adolescents, Mothers, and Fathers

Rewards:	Early Adolescent Families (N=4)				Mid-Adolescent Families (N=5)				Late Adolescent Families (N=4)			
	adol.[1] re: mother	adol. re: father	mother's self-report	father's self-report	adol. re: mother	adol. re: father	mother's self-report	father's self-report	adol. re: mother	adol. re: father	mother's self-report	father's self-report
1. Verbal (congratulations, praise or thanks)	1	3	2	3	4	4	4	5	3	4	4	4
2. Physical (hugs, kisses, pats)	2			1			2	2			2	
3. Material (gifts, treats, going out for meals, monetary)	3	3	2(NC1)[2]	2	4(NC1)	3	4(NC2)	5(NC3)	1(NC1)	3(NC2)	2(NC2)	3(NC2)
4. Privileges (sleeping in, special activities)	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1		1	2(NC1)	1(NC1)
5. Affective (being "nicer," showing pleasure, or giving assistance)		2		1	1	2	2(NC1)		3	1	2	2(NC1)

[1]adol.=adolescent
[2]NC = specifies that this reward is not given contingent on specific behaviors or achievements.
(NC1) means one of the listed participants reported that this rewards was not contingent of specific behaviors.

3. Adolescent Influences

Peer Relationships

Neither the early adolescent males nor their fathers made any allusions to the adolescents' peer group in their phenomenological descriptions of the adolescent-parent relationship. Both mothers, however, identified a concern about possible negative influences by peers and a desire to monitor or guide this involvement in order to moderate negative effects. Mrs. C.'s comments at the outset of her interview help to illustrate this:

> Interviewer: The first question is could you describe your relationship with Charles?
> Mrs. C.: Oh, actually, a very easy relationship. I joke around with him an awful lot. I tend to be interested in him and his friends, and I'd rather have him bring his friends home here and, like I'll go out and play ball with him and things like that, I'll do things with him. A lot of sports I'll do with him and so it's actually a very easy-going relationship. I don't know how else to describe it.
> Interviewer: Does he bring home friends often?
> Mrs. C.: No, not yet. Like, now, when they're sort of getting together, I'm going to have to see if I can get him to bring his friends over, you know, and maybe this summer have a barbecue for them for his birthday or something like that. I haven't told him yet, but I've been thinking this. I would rather have him, when they grow up, meet together at a house rather than on a street. So, if he wants to do that, that's perfectly fine, you know, and giving snacks or whatever they want. That's my idea now.
> Interviewer: So you're hoping to set it up like that?
> Mrs. C.: I'm hoping that he will do this, he will feel free to do this. You know, that I'll encourage him to do this, rather, you know when he starts to bring his friends or wanting to go out with his friends.

The mothers' concerns regarding negative peer influences can thus be seen as an anticipation of future problems rather than a reaction to current difficulties. Further investigation of peer relationships for these two adolescents in fact revealed that their parents saw them as moving easily and casually into various peer activities but as not particularly involved in or concerned about close friendships. The early male adolescents similarly did not view peers as a major influence nor as the primary confidants in their lives. Charles saw his parents as influencing him the most, and he would turn to them for help with "big" problems, whereas he would use friends' help only for "small" problems. Barry, on the other hand, saw his older siblings as more influential and helpful than either his parents or his peer group.

For this subgroup, then, the investment of self into peer relationships, which is presumed to be a major feature of the separation-individuation process, has not yet occurred. In fact the impression gained from these two families suggests that peer relationships provide a pleasant pastime for the two boys but play very little role in their current self-image or relationship vis-a-vis their parents.

Cognitive Development

The early adolescent males' phenomenological descriptions of their adolescent-parent relationship were noteably unique as compared to all other subgroups in their extreme brevity and overall concrete nature. Very little insight into their own or their parents' underlying motives or needs was expressed by the two boys, and a generally egocentric perspective was evident in their comments. On the basis of their inital interview comments, then, the early adolescent males appeared to be functioning largely within Piaget's (1972) realm of concrete operational thought, showing little evidence of hypothetical or decentered thinking in their comments.

An analysis of the two boys' levels of identity achievement, based on Marcia's (1966) identity status questionnaire placed both early male adolescents in the "role diffused" category. This classification describes adolescents who demonstrate a complete lack of psychological investment in specific religious, occupational or political commitments and it is clearly consistent with the observed lack of formal operations and conceptualization abilities demonstrated by the adolescents in this subgroup.

4. Inter-Relationship Transitions

Neither of the early adolescent males perceived any changes in their relationships with their parents over the years, beyond some expansion in the content of shared activities (to include shopping trips and talking about cars) as the adolescent diversified his personal interests. Of the four parents, however, only one mother perceived no change in the relationship. All of the other three parents felt that their sons had begun to demonstrate increased autonomy in areas like expressing personal opinions, meeting their own needs, or

making independent decisions. Moreover, these three parents all indicated that they actively encouraged the individuation process which their sons were entering, to the point of deliberately "backing-off" at times from exerting an influence on their child. Mr. C. for example responded in the following manner:

> Interviewer: Has your relationship with Charles changed much in the past three years?
> Mr. C.: Other than ... nothing other than that you have to start to respect their individualism a little. He's at the point now where he likes to give an answer. He likes to have opinions and things like this and you have to respect those, even if they are silly.
> Interviewer: How do you do that?
> Mr. C.: Well you just agree sometimes, when you know its not right.
> Interviewer: Do you think he knows that you're just agreeing?
> Mr. C.: Oh no.
> Interviewer: You're very careful on that?
> Mr. C.: It'll be years before he figures out that I know more than he does (laugh). He's already getting to that point.

For this father and two other parents of early adolescent males, the perception of increasing autonomy in their sons' attitudes and behaviors could be seen as another indicator of the beginning of a process of differentiation on the part of the adolescents. It is interesting to note that the adolescents themselves were not concurrently cognizant of this process. The concept of the adolescent as a lone, reflective organizer of reality, struggling against parental superego domination is clearly not applicable from these observations. In fact, for this subgroup, the parents appeared more interested and involved in encouraging their adolescents' developing autonomy than the youngsters themselves.

Summary

For the early adolescent males, the adolescent-parent relationship demonstrated marked similarity and continuity with the relationships of parents and latency-aged children (Youniss, 1980). Such similarities are expected in view of the overlap in ages of Youniss' oldest children sampled and these youngest participants in the present study.

The structure of the adolescent-parent relationship for this subgroup remained primarily one of unilateral authority, with parents exerting guidelines, expectations and controls on behavior, and the adolescents appearing largely convinced of and content with

their parents' superior knowledge and judgement. That is, the adolescents acknowledged the parental role of authority and took a position which was complementary to it, thereby demonstrating the norm of complementary reciprocity existant for this subgroup. This relational structure between adolescent and parent can be seen as indicative of an interactional symbiosis in which there is minimal differentiation between the two. While this form of symbiosis is clearly not equivalent to Mahler's pre-separation phase of infant development, parallels can be observed in the adolescents' almost wholesale acceptance of parental omnipotence and omniscience.

Minor advances in differentiation from parents were, however, demonstrated by the early adolescent males. Similar to the way in which Mahler's infants were observed to exhibit an exploration of others and comparisons back to the mother, the early male adolescents demonstrated a tendency to contrast the opinions and characteristics of mother and father or parent and self. The resultant evaluation of the parental love object as a "less-than-perfect" being can be seen as an important prerequisite of separation or ego differentiation. The sense of a separate "self" may begin to emanate from the adolescents' view that they know better or can do better by themselves than by relying on parental support.

The early adolescent males interviewed for this study did not, however, accomplish this beginning differentiation via conflict with or abrogation of parents. In fact, the minor advances in separation-individuation achieved by this subgroup were specifically those which were sanctioned or even encouraged and orchestrated by the parents. For the early adolescent males, then, the process of separation-individuation could be seen as developing gradually and smoothly from the pre-adolescent relational structure, and as being the product of a co-operative, co-constructed process between parent and adolescent with possibly even greater impetus for change coming from the parental role.

B. Early Adolescent Females

1. Adolescent-Parent Interactions

Shared Activities

The two girls in the early adolescent females subgroup were similar to their male counterparts in their focus on shared activities and having fun together as a basis for the adolescent-parent relationship. However, the girls were considerably more verbal and explored their responses in greater depth. They demonstrated an emerging awareness of underlying cause and effect interactions influencing their satisfaction with the parental relationship. Each girl, for example, drew some connection between her preference for or greater closeness with one particular parent, and the respectively greater amount of time she spent in the company of that parent. Rita R. (aged 14 years) favoured her father because "I'm sort of closer to him than I am to my mom because he usually drives me to places and I'm sort of around him more than I am with my mom," whereas Sandra S. (aged 13 years) shared slightly more closeness with her mother, noting "Well, we get along quite well because I'm really like her. We like to shop and stuff like that. We like to be alone together."

The two girls' perceptions of the relative amounts of time spent with each parent were supported by their mothers' and fathers' comments regarding shared activities. In both families the parent who was identified as interacting less frequently also expressed his/her own awareness of limitations on time spent with the adolescent. This was at least partly attributed to demands of employment. The parents' expressions of regret regarding the restricted interactions suggest that, for this subgroup, a certain desire and expectation for ongoing closeness via shared activities was exhibited by most of the participants. Only Rita described a transition in her focus on shared activities with her parents:

> Interviewer: Has you relationship with your dad always been the way it is now?
> Rita: No.
> Interviewer: Do you want to describe for me how it used to be and how it has changed?
> Rita: Well, when I was younger I sort of wanted to be with him more, but as I

> got older I sort of wanted to be more with my friends, and when you get older you sort of get further away from them (parents). Well, maybe you don't really get further away, but you don't always want to discuss things all the time with them.

Rita's comments suggested a separation process or distancing from shared activities with her parents which reflects the expectations of adolescent theorists who hypothesized increased investment in peer relationships as a normative process of adolescence. However, Rita's comments did not indicate a concurrent denunciation of parental ego support, nor opposition to parental bonds as suggested by Blos (1967, 1979). Instead, Rita explained, she continued to rely on and care about her parents, although her friends were becoming increasingly important to her and she felt greater interest in and caring for them than she had in the past.

Rita's increased investment in external relationships, within the context of ongoing close and supportive parental involvement or a secure "home-base" clearly reflects aspects of the "differentiation" and "early practising" phases of development as described by Mahler (1975). Just as Mahler's infants were observed turning to "other than mother" relationships and repeatedly checking back to mother as the familiar base, Rita's involvement with her friends reflects her widening exploration of the world and the investment in a potential external impetus for her evaluation of the parental love object. That is, Rita's comparison of her own family experiences and views with those of her friends can facilitate the development of a differentiated view of her parents and herself as independent, multidimensional individuals.

With respect to interactional structure, Rita's comments indicated that the general form of her parent-adolescent relationships was still largely asymmetrical, with her parents assuming an instrumental or authoritative role. She did, however, experience some symmetrical interactions via shopping, baking or playing catch with her parents. Sandra, on the other hand, had begun to experience many more symmetrical interactions, at least with her mother. She described the two of them as sharing fun times, laughter, similar opinions and even each others' clothes, and she observed that their relationship "is almost like we were best friends or something. I think she is my best friend." Sandra's

comments appeared to reflect the development of a system of direct or symmetrical reciprocity within her relationship with her mother, in that each person operated as an individual with equal input or control at least in certain interactions. At the same time, however, the intense closeness between Sandra and her mother suggested elements of a regression to less differentiated interactions or a symbiotic relationship between them. Further evidence of the ongoing symbiotic nature of their relationship is presented in the section describing adolescent-parent conflicts. Sandra's intense and reciprocal interactions with her mother occured in conjunction with difficulties in her peer relationships. The possibility of an interactional effect between parent and peer relationships for this adolescent will be examined further in the section on peers.

Verbal Communication

The two early adolescent females appeared generally more interested and involved in verbal interactions with parents than their male counterparts did. Both the girls and their parents described open and candid parent-daughter discussions of the adolescent's concerns. School problems and difficulties with friends were the two major concerns shared with both mothers and fathers. However mothers and daughters agreed that the girls were inclined to avoid discussing some problems regarding conflict with friends or peers if they anticipated parental disapproval or coercive advice. Fathers additionally reported their daughters' avoidance of self-disclosure regarding topics of a more personal or sexual nature like personal hygiene, physical development, or personal feelings regarding friends. The two girls did not mention these areas of non-disclosure in their interviews. However, assuming that the fathers' perceptions are accurate, it would appear that the early adolescent females demonstrated a differentiation of maternal and paternal roles for personal disclosure. The reasons for this distinction are not clear from the interview transcripts, but the implications for the adolescent-parent separation-individuation process are important.

The definition of certain topics or concerns as inappropriate or out-of-bounds in the father-daughter relationship suggests a restriction of shared intimacy and implies

limitations on the daughter's identification with paternal ego functions. That is, topics which are not discussed with fathers represent areas in which paternal authority, influence or support is constrained or absent. The fathers' apparent complicity with the definition of these areas of non-involvement suggests a mutually accepted and possibly socially determined realm of the daughters' increasingly separate or autonomous functioning with respect to fathers. The early-adolescent females thus appeared to be experiencing a differentiation phase of the separation-individuation process in their comparison of one parent with the other and identification of appropriate topics of self-disclosure and advice-seeking for each parent.

The early adolescent females differentiated their relationships with peers and siblings as well as with parents on the basis of shared communications. As with the early adolescent males, the two girls indicated a preference for parental advice over that of peers, and utilized peers primarily for disclosure of problems with other friends. Once again, however, an older sibling was identified as a preferred confidant over both parents and friends. The older sibling was considered more likely to relate to the adolescent's problems accurately and confidentially:

> Interviewer: Is there anyone else you would rather talk to about certain problems?
> Rita: Sometimes I like talking to my sister because she knows how I'd feel because she had the same type of problems and she keeps secrets.

As well, verbal communications between siblings were more likely to involve symmetrical reciprocity than those with parents:

> Interviewer: What kind of advice does your sister give you, or what kind of help does she give you?
> Rita: Usually the same that my mom would give me, but I think its like, she tells me in a different way, so I sort of agree more with her.
> Interviewer: How is her way different? How does she tell you?
> Rita: Well she sort of – like, she may have the same type of problem, so I can – so I give her advice sometimes, so we sort of have the same advice.
> Interviewer: You feel you give advice back and forth, so you feel sort of like an equal with her more?
> Rita: Yeah. Yeah.

Relationships with an older sibling thus can be seen as potentially incorporating valuable elements of both adolescent-parent and adolescent-peer relationships. The sibling

is likely more attuned to the cultural-social peer group of the adolescent than the parents are, and may have recently experienced similar personal problems or have undergone a transition in the adolescent-parent relationship. He or she likely experiences familial affection and concern for the younger adolescent, yet does not exert the explicit authority or control of a parent. As a result, the older sibling can facilitate the differentiation process and the adolescent's disengagement from the infantile love-object ties by acting as an ideal transitional object.

Conflict

As with the early adolescent males, families in the female subgroup described their adolescent-parent conflicts as generally restricted to minor irritants and disagreements. Issues which raised discord in these families included adolescents' untidyness, avoiding chores, tardiness, wasting money or fashion style. The overwhelming emphasis on adolescent-instigated conflicts (only one participant, a mother, mentioned her own "crabbing or nagging" as a parent-induced conflict) reinforces the view of unilateral parental authority in this subgroup.

Unlike the male subgroup, however, the early adolescent females did demonstrate some insight into the underlying motives of and emotional influences on their own and their parents' behaviors. Both girls noted an awareness that their parents' moods would influence or dictate interactional conflict, but demonstrated minimal understanding or interest regarding circumstances which determined mood changes in the parent. Rita R., speaking of her mother, stated, "We usually get along good but sometimes if we're both in bad moods we don't really understand each other. If one of us isn't really in a good mood or something then we don't usually understand why or something so we sort of get down each other's back anyway." Her comment indicated an awareness of the reciprocal effect and the consequence of bad moods in the mother-daughter relationship, but suggested little insight into constructive ways of anticipating or handling the emotions to avoid conflict. She appeared rather resigned to the presence of friction and misunderstanding between them as a result of their personal emotions. Sandra S., on the

other hand, expressed a rudimentary awareness of possible coping strategies for handling her father's bad moods: "When he is in a bad mood you never do anything to bug him or he is in a worse mood. He yells at everybody. Then my mom usually steps in and tells him to shut up and he shuts up." The perceived influence of this adolescent remains passive – she can avoid any actions which might be irritating to her father – whereas the active influence – convincing dad to "shut up" – remains in the domain of another adult.

Clearly the interactional structure of parents' unilateral authority remained intact for these families, but the adolescent daughters' perception of the parent as an omnipotent and omniscient love object was beginning to undergo some changes. The early adolescent females demonstrated some rudimentary insights regarding the interplay of experience, affect and behavior which reflected a beginning awareness of the parent as a differentiated person with needs and feelings separate from their own. This evidence of a beginning separation-individuation process was, however, tempered by the continuation of a generally egocentric perspective or world view. That is, the girls' concerns regarding their parents' moods related primarily to how these might affect them personally. Their awareness of what might antagonize the parent or instigate an argument or bad mood was similarly restricted to their own actions or opinions.

For this subgroup, the differentiation of parental traits and characteristics indicated a progression from the largely symbiotic relationships evident in the early adolescent male subgroup. However, the early adolescent females' ongoing egocentricity and acceptance of ultimate parental controls still reflected some characteristics of adolescent-parent symbiosis, thereby providing evidence of a gradual transition or developmental change process from the early relational structure to the differentiation phase of the relationship.

Adolescent-parent attitude and value congruence was generally high for the early adolescent female subgroup, particularly with respect to moral issues and social expectations. Both girls viewed their parents as positive role models overall. Some differences of opinion were reported, regarding issues like fashion, finances and amount

of time spent with peers. These specific areas of disagreement were considerably less significant, however, than the difference between the two girls regarding attitudinal congruence with their parents.

Sandra's comments for example, reflected her very strong desire to identify with her mother's attitudes and opinions: "Most of the time I try to have the same opinion (as my mom)"; "I feel good inside when my mom is happy with me. It makes me feel a lot better and I try not to do anything wrong." Rita, on the other hand, described her own transition to rather a different view:

> Interviewer: Have you always gotten along with your mom the way you do now? Has your relationship with her been different?
> Rita: I think we were a bit closer, more closer.
> Interviewer: More closer now?
> Rita: Before.
> Interviewer: Before. Why was that?
> Rita: Probably because I wanted more attention and I needed, like, to learn more and so she helped me and she taught me.
> Interviewer: And are you a bit less close now?
> Rita: In some things. Like, well usually in ideas, like, she'll have a different opinion about something but before we used to sort of share the same type of opinion.
> Interviewer: Why do you think that has changed?
> Rita: Probably 'cause I was younger and I sort of wanted to have the same opinion as her because I thought it was better, but now I sort of have my own opinions.

Of the two girls, Rita clearly demonstrated a separation-individuation process involving conscious differentiation of her own attitudes and values from those of her parent. Sandra, on the other hand, appeared more like the early adolescent males and Youniss' (1980) pre-adolescent sample in her strong identification with parental ego ideals. For Sandra and her mother, the interrelationship structure remained largely one of unilateral authority indicative of a symbiotic or undifferentiated phase of development. Yet as noted earlier, the structural form of the shared activities and communications between Sandra and her mother was frequently one of symmetrical reciprocity, indicating that, although Sandra did not appear to be separating from the introjected parental ego as Rita had, she nonetheless appeared to undergo an individuation process within the mother-daughter relationship by virtue of mutual restructuring of the interactions between them.

2. Parental Influences

Parental Expectations

As with the male subgroup, parents' major expectations of their early adolescent daughters included both process goals (respectful, helpful behaviors) and outcome goals (school achievement). Unlike the males, however, the two girls in this subgroup were cognizant of the more abstract process expectations, like responsibility and respect, which their parents held. In terms of Piaget's stages of cognitive development, their expression of such abstract concepts can be seen as indicative of the girls' departure from a primarily concrete operational stage to more formal thought processes. As well, the two early adolescent females appeared generally more conscious of their voluntary co-operation with parents' expectations than the males did. Comments like "she (mom) wants to trust me, so I make sure she can trust me" or "we want to be close to him (dad) and (have a relationship) that we can always talk about or we can help each other out" indicated the girls' sense of commitment to or identification with parental expectations.

For both early adolescent subgroups then, the overall structure of the adolescent-parent relationship remained one of unilateral authority with parents ultimately determining expectations and adolescents obeying. Within this unilateral authority structure, however, the female adolescents' greater personal identification or sense of voluntary co-operation with these goals can be seen as indicative of a beginning process of individuation in which parental goals or ideals become accepted and validated, or introjected, in a more abstract, reasoned manner than before.

The indicators of a change process observed for this subgroup are consistent with observations from Youniss' (1980) study of the parent-child relationship:

> At about age 12, children repeat the same sequences as their younger counterparts but with significant modifications. Obedience is said to be "voluntary" or of "free will" and parents are described as less than all-knowing, all-powerful figures ... Overall however, one structure (unilateral authority) depicts the relationship for the period in question (age 6-12 years) with only a slight hint that it may be changing at about the time adolescence begins. (Youniss and Smollar, 1985, p. 3)

Although Youniss did not explicitly discuss the observed changes as indicative of an individuation process, the consistency between observations from his younger participants and those of the early adolescents in this study supports the concept of a gradual developmental change process from childhood to adolescence. The observed nuances of adolescents' increasing self-determination within the constraints of ultimate parental authority forecast the beginning of the developmental individuation process: the evolution and synthesis of the adolescent's unique, personal sense of self.

The parents in the early adolescent female subgroup expressed very positive expectations overall for their daughters' futures. All four parents felt certain that their daughters would become mature, successful adults and would accomplish a shift in object relations to a heterosexual partnership. Their expectations of the consequences for themselves of their daughter's ultimate departure from the family home were equally consistent. All four parents anticipated experiencing a sense of loss. They would miss their daughter's personality and contribution to the family after her departure, but envisioned their energies subsequently being expended more on the remaining siblings. Neither of the two girls was a youngest child, and both girls were viewed as relatively mature for their age by the parents. The possible consequences of parents' expectations for dramatic, negative life-style changes thus do not appear to be a factor for this subgroup, but will be examined further for the remaining groups.

Parents were also asked to anticipate their own reactions to their daughters' departure from home. The parents in both early adolescent female families expected to experience ongoing closeness, involvement and influence in their daughters' lives even after she was living on her own. Mrs. S., for example, stated,

> "It's something I really want for Sandra, to have her own apartment and for me to come and visit and, like, she'll say, "you know, when you come to my place, I'm going to make you dinner and invite you over and, you know, this sort of thing," It's something that she talks about, so I look forward to it (being) that way.

Mr. R. similarly indicated,

> I think I'll probably be happy for Rita, that she's moving on to another stage in her life, and I hope that she can come back whenever she needs help, to mom

> and dad, and we'll give her every opportunity to endeavor and obtain whatever she decides.

However, Mr. R. also expected that this ongoing influence and involvement in his daughter's life might end once she was married;

> The decisions then are going to be totally hers and whoever she marries. I don't think you're going to have, or I'm going to have all that much say in what happens, so I think that'll probably be harder and the thoughts of what's going to happen to my little daughter when she's really gone out on her own.

Mr. R.'s comments suggest that, for him, the adolescent-parent separation process will not be completed until his daughter has established a permanent relationship which can then replace his function as protector and advisor. Although this specific milestone signalling achieved independence may differ from one parent to another, the parents of early adolescents generally expressed both expectation and desire for ongoing intimacy and involvement in their childrens' lives even after they moved away from home.

Parenting Style

Characteristics of the overall parenting style utilized with early adolescents were described in early adolescent males' results. As noted, the parents of early adolescents ultimately maintained authoritarian controls over their children, yet made provisions for authoritative or democratic interactions when they considered these appropriate or non-detrimental to the well-being of their son or daughter. Within this structual form of adolescent-parent interactions, all parents of early adolescents also demonstrated supportive, affectionate involvement in their children's lives, and the early adolescents appeared uniformly cognizant and appreciative of this positive intent. The only criticism of parenting techniques, expressed by one early adolescent female, pertained to her perception that her mother was slow to adapt to her children's development and maturation:

> Sometimes I sort of think she believes still how it should be before. But my sister always tries to make the point that, 'Like, things change as you get (older)' and sometimes she wants to treat us how we were when we were little and we don't really always like that."

This daughter appeared to have evaluated the parent-child relationship from the perspective of her older sibling. Her desire for faster transitions in the parent-child relationship thus may be indicative of an acceleration of the separation-individuation process for adolescents with older siblings. Once again, it appeared that the older sibling acted as a transitional love object who facilitated the differentiation process and acted as a role model for the practising phase of separation-individuation.

3. Adolescent Influences

Peer Relationships

Contrary to the early adolescent males, both girls in the female subgroup discussed their peers in their phenomenological comments regarding the adolescent-parent relationship. As previously mentioned, Rita saw her desire for increased interactions with peers as a source of minor conflict and reduced time spent with parents (indicative of a theoretical view of a beginning separation process). Sandra, on the other hand, described poor peer relations in conjunction with a very intense mother-daughter closeness:

> Sandra: We always have good times together. We get along. I act older and she acts young and it is almost like we're best friends or something. I think she is my best friend.
> Interviewer: Better than any of the friends that you have from school?
> Sandra: Yeah.
> Interviewer: Why is that?
> Sandra: I really don't like the kids from school.
> Interviewer: Why not?
> Sandra: They are mean to everybody. They get together and pick on people.

Causality is certainly not clear from this interchange and it may be that Sandra's greater closeness with her mother resulted in a more critical assessment of her peers or in their "picking on" her. However, her comments appeared more appropriate to a scenario in which she attempted to become more intimate with peers, was rebuffed or hurt, and turned to her mother for a more familiar and supportive relationship. Whatever the reason, both Rita and Sandra were obviously beginning to think about peer relationships and to evaluate these in light of their relationship to their parents, something which was not evident in the responses of either of the two early adolescent males.

Perhaps of even greater significance than the general increase in attention to peer interactions for early adolescent females were the observed differences in the two girls' perceptions of the peer relationships. According to Youniss and Smollar's (1985) observations of parent versus peer relationships during adolescence, the development of symmetrical reciprocity in adolescents' interactions with friends was considered to be a first step in the adolescent individuation process. Because friendships did not carry the history of unilateral authority and dependence inherent in the parent-child relationship, these peer relations were presumed to facilitate adolescents' experimentation with and expression of a separate sense of self or individuality. Rita's description of her increasing interest and energy investment in peer relations combined with her willingness to express disagreement with her parents would appear to support Youniss and Smollar's depiction of the individuation process.

Sandra, however, did not experience a similar increase in self-investment in peer relationships due at least partly to her perception of unfair treatment or unkindness from her friends. According to Youniss and Smollar's comments one might consequently expect Sandra to exhibit delays in the individuation process and, in fact, she did appear to be less emancipated or separated than Rita, particularly in interactions with her mother. Her reportedly rebuffed attempt to invest in peer relationships thus appeared to result in a return to the secure and familiar "home base" of a more symbiotic relationship with her mother, in much the same way as a practising-stage infant was observed venturing forth to explore its world and then scurrying back to the mother for reassurance and comfort. It is noteworthy, however, that within this more symbiotic mother-daughter relationship, Sandra and Mrs. S's interactions incorporated a significantly greater amount of symmetrical reciprocity than those observed in other early adolescent-parent relationships. Early adolescence thus appears to be a time for increasingly symmetrical relationships and a greater awareness of self-in-relationship, but the route by which this transformation can be achieved may be more flexible and multi-dimensional than previously conceived. In the cases of Rita and Sandra, for example, two paths for adolescent development

appeared to be indicated: one a separation-individuation process incorporating increased investment in peer relationships; the other an individuation-in-connection with the parent, in which interactional transformations within the adolescent-parent relationship initiated the developmental change process.

Cognitive Development

Both early adolescent females appeared more verbal overall, and evidenced more abstract thinking processes than the early adolescent males did. The girls were also more aware of parental affect or "moods" as an underlying influence on their interactions, but maintained a largely egocentric perspective otherwise. For example, as noted previously, both girls were able to identify that their parents might experience bad moods just as they themselves did. The girls' sensitivity to these parental emotions, however, was largely restricted to an awareness of how these might affect or be influenced by parent-daughter interactions. For the early adolescent females, then, there was some evidence of cognitive development moving into the stage of formal operations (Piaget, 1969) and the emergence of the concept of co-operation (Piaget, 1932) within relationships. Concrete thinking processes were still evident in the two girls' comments, however, suggesting that the early adolescent females were undergoing a cognitive development transition from the concrete to the formal operational stage.

Both early adolescent females were rated in the "identity diffused" category of Marcia's (1966) identity status interview, with Sandra obtaining a combined diffused-foreclosure rating. For Sandra there was some evidence that, although she had not passed through any real life "crisis," or decision period, she had begun to form some personal commitments, primarily regarding religion and occupation which were clearly consonant with those of her parents. Sandra's identity status rating was thus clearly consistent with the overall interview impression of a high level of symbiosis and low conflict level, especially in her mother-daughter interactions. Rita demonstrated less non-critical acceptance of parental choices or commitments as her own. Her responses were more clearly indicative of a pre-crisis lack of commitment although she appeared to have begun

thinking a bit about occupations and religious ideology. For both early adolescent females, then, the emergence of formal operational cognition appeared to have exerted limited influence on identity formation during this developmental stage. In fact, early adolescence generally did not appear to be a time of active questioning or consolidation of individual identity or ideology for the adolescents participating in this study.

4. Inter-Relationship Transitions

All family members in the early adolescent female subgroup experienced some form of transition in the adolescent-parent relationship. Several diverse causes for interrelationship changes were hypothesized by the participants, including temporary separations due to parents' job requirements, arrival of younger siblings, and physical and cognitive maturation of the adolescent. There was general consensus, however, that a change occurred at about age eleven or twelve years. As one father described this change in his daugher:

> She's grown up a lot. I think I'm surprised at her – Between the ages of five and ten, eleven, they're the same kid. Then all of a sudden they're striving to be a young adult in an adult world. They start to do things like "can I sit down and have a cup of tea with you guys?" or actually sit in the room and be involved in a discussion about who knows what with the neighbours..."

As this father indicated, the adolescent's interest in gaining admission to the adult world of interactions via verbal communication of ideas and increasing mutuality or direct reciprocity in shared interactions appeared to increase markedly during the stage of early adolescence for this subgroup. The changes observed in the parent-early adolescent female relationships appear to reflect a transition from the differentiation phase of the relationship to increased adolescent involvement in a practising stage of the separation-individuation process.

Summary

The structure of the adolescent-parent relationship for the early adolescent female subgroup remained one of overall unilateral parental authority. Parents continued to exert ultimate controls and decisions regarding their daughters' goals and behaviors during early

adolescence, and the two girls maintained a complementary role of obedience and deference toward their parents. In contrast to the structure of unilateral authority for early male adolescents, however, the female participants demonstrated a much more differentiated view of their parents. They saw their parents as multi-dimensional individuals with personal failings and virtues and viewed their own co-operation with parents as being more voluntary and self-determined. The concept of parental omnipotence and omniscience was noteably reduced for this subgroup. However, the girls demonstrated an enduring faith in their parents' good intentions and support towards them. Shared activities remained an important element of the adolescent-parent relationship for this subgroup, although verbal communications had gained significance as well.

The early adolescent females' level of cognitive development and identity formation further supported their placement in a differentiation stage of a separation-individuation process with parents. The girls demonstrated increasingly abstract, formal operational thought processes, albeit in conjunction with an ongoing egocentric perspective, and were rated as identity-diffused or diffused-foreclosed. Their limited interest in developing or experimenting with personal ideology or identity indicated that the two girls had not yet experienced a wider exploration of the world and sense of personal independence which might indicate a practising phase of separation-individuation. Instead, both girls continued to experience their personal growth and influence largely in relation to their parents, that is via a gradual transition from the symbiotic interrelationship to increasing differentiation or awareness of changes in adolescent-parent relations.

Differences in the structure of the adolescent-parent relationships for the two families in this subgroup suggested the existence of two distinct developmental processes during adolescence. The first resembled the separation-individuation process which was described by Mahler (1965) and adopted by various adolescent researchers (Hoffman, 1984; Josselson, 1980; Mollnow, 1981). One early adolescent female demonstrated increasing separation from her parents through her greater involvement in shared activities with peers, increased conflict with parents and questioning of parental views and opinions. The second early adolescent

female described a similar process with respect to her father-daughter interactions, while the mother-daughter relationship had evolved a structure of symmetrical reciprocity, evidenced by shared activities, communications, attitudes and opinions. This second girl had not increased her commitment to peer relationships nor demonstrated a separation from her mother. The development of her personal sense of competence, individuality and identity within the relationship with her mother therefore, reflected a second potential process for adolescent development: an individuation-in-connection process.

C. Mid-Adolescent Males

Three boys were included in this subgroup in an attempt to interview at least one fairly representative or "normal" family unit. Unfortunately, fathers in all three families had experienced significant health or alcohol problems which may have affected the interrelationships of the families' members, and the obtained observations must be examined with this in mind.

1. Adolescent-Parent Interactions

Shared Activities

The boys in this subgroup accorded minor significance to activities shared with their parents, and instead highlighted features like verbal communication or affective support in their phenomenological descriptions of the adolescent-parent relationship. The boys still described various shared activities including instrumental interactions like helping with jobs around the house and recreational pursuits like playing raquetball or going to sports events. As with the younger subgroup, all three mid-adolescent males reported more frequent interactions with their mothers, particularly in receiving services like rides or assistance in daily activities. However, whereas the early adolescent males appeared to see shared activities as intrinsically-valuable constituents of the relationship, these older boys demonstrated an awareness of the activities' underlying purpose for facilitating or demonstrating mutual support, affection or communication. This

realization suggests their own awareness of increasingly symmetrical interactions between parent and child. Gary G. (aged 17 years) stated this most explicitly in describing his relationship with his father:

> Well we enjoy more quiet times together. We go for walks, we don't speak, but we're together an awful lot and I'm always around if he needs a hand. He's around when I need one. We both enjoy a lot of stuff, T.V., some different shows and whatnot, different books. If I read it, he'll read it and pretty much vice versa. So books are forever going back and forth. Like I said, we don't joke around as much, my dad's a much more serious man. He does have his side though, when he gets going. It's not as often, but when he gets going you have to look out. But mostly just support between the two of us.

For Gary, then, and the mid-adolescent males generally, there was evidence of increasing symmetry in the interactions characterizing the adolescent-parent relationship at this stage, although asymmetrical interactions were by no means discontinued. Parents were still more likely than adolescents to provide a service in their interactions, including driving their sons to activities, teaching skills like cooking or repairs, and helping with homework. Moreover, for two of the mid-adolescent males, the increase in symmetrical activities was evident in interactions with one parent only. David (aged 16 years), for example, described greater symmetry in shared interactions with his mother, while Matthew M. (aged 15 years), was more involved in symmetrical activities with his father. For Gary G., symmetrical interactions were evident in his relationships with both parents. An examination of the parents' perceptions of their relationships helped to explain the observed distinctions. David's mother explained her own closeness and involvement in activities with her son in light of her husband's frequent absence or unavailability due to his out-of-town work and his drinking problem in previous years. She saw her greater involvement with her son partly as a natural consequence of these circumstances and partly as the result of a conscious effort on her part to compensate for inadequacies in the father-son relationship. David's perceptions of the two relationships were based more exclusively on his own view of the respective effort or interest exhibited by each parent. Of his father, David said,

> If he wants to take me somewhere, its not really his idea. It's my mom's. We went fishing one time and – in a fishing derby – and it was my mom's idea, not my dad's. The only thing that he ever thought of doing was to go play

raquetball and we don't do that very much anymore.

David's relationship with his mother, conversely, involved frequently shared activities with an underlying basis of perceived understanding and acceptance:

> Me and my mom we get along. Well, we do everything together. If I want to go into town and go to the mall say, she'll be the one to go with me and my dad, he'll delay it until my mom will get fed up and she'll go with me or something.

A similar pattern of differential parental involvement in activities was evident for Matthew's family, except here it was his father who described a conscious effort to achieve greater intimacy via shared activites. Introducing his comments with an explanation that his past drinking problem had seriously curtailed their relationship until a few years ago, Mr. M. explained that,

> Mr. M.: I was to the point, I guess, of losing him, and one day I decided I didn't want that. So it's coming back a whole bunch of it right now. It's difficult you now. Sometimes you try too hard and sometimes – I know what my goal is and that is to try to get him back, to get him back fully. I can't under-do it and I can't over-do it.
> Interviewer: What kind of things are you doing to get him back? You are obviously going at it pretty consciously.
> Mr. M.: Yeah, I have to be very interested in what he is doing. I missed a lot of what he was doing before. He never played (sports) or like that and last year is the first year he played, and we are both into it so heavy that he really improved and he was really happy and I was. You know, it seems like that when you give him a chance. Whatever he wants to do, I am fully behind him.

Matthew's mother, on the other hand, viewed her son as becoming increasingly independent in requiring less assistance from her to meet his responsibilities, and disengaging himself more from joint family activities. Her acceptance and support of this apparent separation process was reflected in her comment that "I've taught him to be self-reliant so that I'm not always at his beck and call."

Two observations can be drawn from these relationship descriptions. The first pertains to the importance of parental intentions or behaviors in determining the extent of shared activities at this stage. The mid-adolescent males appeared to conform to the parents' definition of a desireable level of symmetry and interaction in the relationship. Thus, the presence of a separation process or intentional disengagement from shared activities with the parent appears to be at least partly determined by the parent's demonstrated desire for and encouragement of shared interactions with their mid-

adolescent sons. This observation clearly differs from the theoretical concept of a separation process involving active rejection and physical disengagement from parents by mid-adolescents (Blos, 1967; Erickson, 1968; Freud, 1958). These mid-adolescents, instead of moving beyond the realm of parental involvement of their own volition, appear to be involved in a mutually-determined (or in Youniss and Smollar's, 1985, term: "co-constructed") relationship in which both parties influence and determine the interactional form, although the parents still retain ultimate control over the amount and type of shared activities.

The second observation drawn from the variations in adolescent-parent shared activities is drawn from the apparent balance in roles when the mother and father are considered as a parental unit. All three mothers in these mid-adolescent families alluded to a conscious adjustment of their own interactions with their sons to compensate for or accommodate changes in their husbands' involvement. Although this may represent a consequence of the special problems encountered by families in which the father has experienced alcohol or health problems, similar interdependent or conjunctive interactions have been observed by other researchers. Montemayor (1982), for example, observed a positive correlation between the frequency of adolescent-mother conflicts and the amount of time adolescents spent with their fathers. He suggested that the adolescent-father relationship may have been used as a substitute for adolescent-mother closeness in these families. Youniss and Smollar (1985) similarly observed that mothers' and fathers' interactions with adolescents could be seen as working in consort: "For example, mothers' direct actions that encourage adolescents to assert themselves are supplemented by fathers' indirect actions of not monitoring their sons and daughters; thus, room is left for self-exploration outside the fathers' purview" (p. 155).

While these previous research studies supported the view of complementarity and transmutability in parental roles, the phenomenological focus of the present study helped to elucidate the potential for conscious adaptation or transformation of the parental role within adolescent-parent relationships. This evidence of the parents' ability to purposely

adapt their own involvement with the adolescents in order to compensate for perceived negative intra- or extra-familial influences suggests that adolescent-parent relationships may be more flexible than previously theorized and that there may be a multiplicity of potential routes for a process of separation-individuation in adolescent development.

Communication

Communication and understanding appeared to be the most significant overall determinants of the middle adolescent males' satisfaction with their parent-son relationships. This group of boys, especially singled out their mothers as possessing caring and communicative abilities:

> "She's understanding. If I ever have any problems she's understanding. She talks to me whenever we get in trouble or anything. And we can talk together." (Matthew M., 15 years);
>
> "(I depend on my mother for) someone to listen to me. Someone to talk to. Cheat at cards with. So she always says. Well with my dad it's a lot of advice. He teaches me quite a few things: driving -"; (Gary G., 17 years).
>
> "I find I can talk to her quite easily because she understands what I'm talking about and how I feel." (David D., 16 years).

Although it was not possible to determine whether these mothers achieved a more central and supportive role for their sons as a result of the past difficulties with the father's involvement with illness and alcohol abuse, all three boys did allude in some way to difficulties and limits in their communications with their fathers. For example, Matthew's comments regarding his communication with his father ("We talk together. It's up to him, you know, politics and that," and "[we] see basically eye to eye. We've got the same feelings on most things.") indicated potential limits or constraints placed on the topics of discussion, as well as elements of an interactional structure of unilateral authority and complementary reciprocity.

Gary's interactions with his father demonstrated somewhat greater reciprocal symmetry but their verbal communications were constrained by the father's perceived reticence. According to Gary, "... we don't speak, but we're together an awful lot and I'm always around if he needs a hand. He's around when I need one ... he's a very private man ... he doesn't discuss his problems with us." Gary's assessment of his father

as being an understanding parent was fostered through his mother's mediation:

> Mom, she's really a kind of go between us. Things I won't say to my dad, I will say to mom, and things dad won't say to me, he will say to mom, and so it goes between her.

David's communications with his father were more seriously attenuated:

> The only way I can really talk to my dad is if I would joke with him. Tell him a joke or something, or if I can just tell him something that he doesn't know. I can't really communicate with him any other way. I just don't know what to say to him.

David's good communication with his mother was consequently perceived by him and his mother more as a substitute for the father-son relationship than an attempt to facilitate its development.

For all three mid-adolescent boys, the attenuated verbal interactions with their fathers indicated the general continuation of a unilateral authority structure in father and son communications. Compared to the younger males, however, this subgroup demonstrated an overall increase in symmetrical reciprocity in parent-child communications, especially in the mother-son relationship. The boys' increasing sense of influence and equality in verbal interactions with their mothers was indicative of a practising process. That is, they were beginning to experience and explore their own competence and individuality via their contributions to these verbal interactions.

One example of increased symmetrical reciprocity in the mid-adolescents' relationships with mothers was their slightly greater mutual sharing of problems. Adolescents discussed concerns regarding school, finances and relationships with their mothers and generally appreciated their mothers' disclosure of similar experiences from their own youth. As well, mothers occasionally turned to their sons for ideas or support with concerns which they were experiencing. Fathers were seen as less likely to engage in self-disclosure and were generally asked for help with more instrumental or concrete problems like how to build or do something.

The mid-adolescent males usually tended to use the advice or suggestions of both their mothers and fathers, but were more selective regarding topics for which they would request or accept advice or help from fathers. Friends were not preferred as confidants or

advisors due to the boys' perceptions that their peers lacked the appropriate attitude, experience or concern to be truly helpful. The boys felt that their friends might joke around or "lie" about problems and advice, or indicated that their friends were "all very opinionated and very, very sure they're right." These differences in mid-adolescents' interpersonal communications with their mothers, fathers and friends reflected their increasing awareness and differentiation of these individuals. The boys appeared to have progressed beyond the differentiation process, however, to an adaptation of their own verbal interactions with various individuals in their lives: a practising stage of individuation. Contrary to theoretical views that the adolescent practising phase is a period of increasing intimacy with peers concurrent with distancing from parents, however, this subgroup demonstrated no such commitment to peer influences.

With respect to distancing from parents or increased adolescent-parent separation during the practising phase, the observed differences in mother-son and father-son communications for this subgroup were suggestive of differences in the separation-individuation process within these two relationships. Two of the three mid-adolescent boys appeared to be individuating, or advancing in self-definition and understanding via increased verbal communication and symmetrical reciprocity with their mothers. In their relationships with their fathers, on the other hand, they appeared to be undergoing a separation process, distancing themselves from paternal influence and authority by limiting self-disclosure and turning more to mothers, friends or personal resources for problem resolution. This separation process was less evident in the third adolescent-father relationship, possibly due to the father's conscious effort to foster communication and closeness between them. For this adolescent, however, there was less evidence of symmetrical reciprocity in his verbal interactions with either parent, but an increasing tendency to express his emotions verbally. This increased verbal interaction and identification with his father gradually replaced his previous tendency to withdraw or keep problems to himself. It may be that the secure relationship that is presumed necessary as a basis for the separation-individuation process had not existed between this

adolescent and father in the past and, with his father's increased availability, he had subsequently regressed to a more symbiotic interactional level from which to resume the separation-individuation process.

Conflict

Compared to the younger subgroups there appeared to be a general increase in the frequency of conflicts between mid-adolescent males and their parents, but the actual areas of discord remained relatively benign in the eyes of both adolescents and parents. As with the younger groups, conflicts usually focussed on the adolescents' behavioral patterns like being untidy or tardy, avoiding chores or fighting with siblings. However, some additional areas of discord observed in this subgroup, such as the adolescent's desire for access to a car or wanting to stay home from family holidays, were indicative of an increasing drive for independence and autonomous functioning. This desire for increased independence provides evidence of the adolescents' advancement into the practising phase of a separation-individuation process, in which they invoke a wider exploration of the external world and increase their involvement in it. As with Mahler's observations of infant development however, the adolescents' transition to the practising stage was neither smooth nor constant and considerable overlap with differentiation processes was evident. For example, one of the mid-adolescent males who had expressed a desire to own a car, described an issue of contention between him and his father which appeared inconsistent with his wish:

> There are some days that "No. I don't feel like driving, I don't want to do this." Had a few near accidents and after that I just "No. I don't want to get in this car for a week," and I don't. He never understands. He's of the opinion, "Like, you've got to get in there and try right away."

This apparent contradiction between the adolescent's wish for increased autonomy and his resistance to parental encouragement of this autonomy can be understood in terms of a regression to the differentiation stage of separation-individuation. That is, the adolescent's return to a more dependent role, following his perception of self-limitations in his mastery of the external world, appears analagous to the infant's behavior of

returning to the mother as a secure home-base for emotional refueling throughout the process of exploring its environment.

Compared to their early adolescent counterparts, however, mid-adolescent males were clearly more advanced in the development of a differentiation process. The mid-adolescent males generally described specific issues or behaviors which would initiate conflicts with their parents. They appeared more cognizant than their early adolescent counterparts of the causal relationship between their actions or attitudes and resultant discord in their relationship. Moreover, they expressed an awareness that conflict or discord might be initiated by the parent, thereby demonstrating a less egocentric attitude than the younger adolescents did. Two of the mid-adolescent males even discussed the existence of arguments or discord in their parent-son relationships in conjunction with their assessments that these were "good" relationships, and they appeared able to accept the existence of this dichotomy quite easily:

> "We (my father and I) get along okay. We do argue quite a bit, but we do get along."
>
> "We get along really well, joke around an awful lot. But there are days where she gets on your nerves and you want to tell her where to go. I would say very good, the relationship with my mom."

These observations reflect a definite transition from the early adolescent males' perceptions of parental omnipotence and omniscience to a more differentiated view of the parent as an individual with human failings and virtues.

With the attainment of a more differentiated view of their parents, one would expect a transformation in the adolescent-parent relationship from the interactional structure of unilateral parental authority and obligatory adolescent obedience to one of increasing symmetrical reciprocity and adolescent autonomy. In the area of adolescent-parent conflicts, the mid-adolescent males demonstrated an increased sense of personal influence or control via their identification of personal coping strategies which they used to deal with such discord. For example, one adolescent noted that if he and his father got into arguments they would "stay away" from each other and be "angry at each other for about a day and then just forget about it." His recognition of avoidance or withdrawal

tactics as effective mechanisms for handling interpersonal conflict demonstrated his movement away from the structure of complementary reciprocity observed in the early adolescent's compliance with parental authority, although he had not yet attained a level of symmetrical reciprocity in which he and his father could manage their differences via mutual discussion and resolution.

The confluence of mid-adolescent and parent attitudes and value systems remained high overall, particularly on issues which they deemed "important," like educational aspirations, religious and political views, interpersonal relations, and attitudes regarding alcohol and drug use. Some differences from the younger subgroup were observed in the mid-adolescent males' greater interest in ideological issues like politics and religion, in which they generally assimilated the parent's views, and in their previously discussed desire for increased independence, which resulted in more frequent arguments with parents. Within the context of ongoing identification (albeit foreclosed commitment) with parental values, the increased conflict between parents and adolescents in this subgroup can be seen as an attempt to address and resolve disagreements or difficulties within the context of an ongoing, close relationship. This is characteristic of a rapprochement stage of separation-individuation, involving the seemingly conflicting drives for increased independence and maintenance of close, supportive ties. Furthermore, the observed conflict reflected a less drastic form of separation between parent and mid-adolescent than that which has frequently been described in theoretical depictions of adolescent development (Erikson, 1968; Freud, 1958).

Only one of the six adolescent-parent relationships in this subgroup yielded evidence supporting a process of psychological separation involving the adolescents' wholesale rejection of and disengagement from a close parental tie. In contrast to the other two boys, this adolescent viewed the conflicts and attitudinal differences between him and his father as detrimental to the overall quality of their relationship. As noted in Table 3, this was the only mid-adolescent who expressed overall dissatisfaction in a parent-adolescent relationship. He identified his father's overly critical attitude and lack

of interest or involvement with him as causing their separation, but he appeared to compensate for this loss by his involvement in a very close and symmetrical relationship with his mother. For this mid-adolescent, then, there was some evidence that the absence of a strong symbiotic father-son relationship during childhood or early adolescence resulted in pronounced psychological separation between him and his father following the differentiation process.

A second boy also appeared not to have developed a symbiotic relationship with his father prior to mid-adolescence. Rather than disengaging from his father, however, this second adolescent appeared to have achieved symbiosis with the father during mid-adolescence in response to the father's increased interest and involvement with him. The differences observed in the separation-individuation processes between these two adolescents and their fathers suggest that the stages and features of the separation-individuation process may be influenced by both adolescent and parent variables. As well, the separation-individuation process appears to incorporate bi-directional movement, accommodating regression to a preceding developmental stage under some circumstances.

2. Parental Influences

Parental Expectations

The mid-adolescent male subgroup was similar to the younger female group in that the adolescents were aware of their parents' abstract process goals for them (like responsibility) as well as their parents' expectations for specific academic achievements or social behaviors. Compared to the younger adolescents, however, both the parents and the adolescents in this subgroup experienced a reduction in unilateral parental authority regarding the determination of other specific outcome goals. For example, parents identified expectations for their sons such as "be happy," "be his own person," or "have a nice life," and the adolescents perceived their parents' goals as messages to "be successful," "do what I want" or "succeed at whatever I do." In both cases, the implication that the adolescent would determine the content or direction of his goals

indicated that the increasing autonomy and independence of the mid-adolescent males was at least partly sanctioned and even encouraged by their parents.

In other areas, however, particularly with respect to their fathers, the adolescents expressed disagreement with their fathers' unilateral determination of excessive or unrealistic expectations for them. One adolescent noted, "I just feel he's a bit too demanding" but was unable or unwilling to describe specific instances of his father's demands. Another indicated that a major area of contention was his father's refusal to accept his son's self-perceived limitations in driving a car. The third boy described his father as not only issuing unrealistic demands, but as being excessively critical also: "He puts too many demands on me ... If I don't do good in school and even if I do do good in school he bugs me about it."

It is interesting that none of the three boys reported excessive expectations from their mothers. Unfortunately, the available information does not disclose a clear explanation for this dichotomy. It could reflect characteristics of this age group or gender, traits of these particular parents, or might represent an artifact of the fathers' difficulties or their sons' attitudes toward them. However, in terms of a separation-individuation process between these mid-adolescents and their parents, the reported differences in parental expectations suggest a lesser degree of symmetrical reciprocity in the adolescent-father relationship as compared to the adolescents and their mothers. In contrast to younger adolescents who generally demonstrated unconditional acceptance of parental expectations and goals, this older subgroup appeared less content with the interactional structure of complementary reciprocity, yet perceived the fathers as being unwilling or unable to relax their expectations or authority with respect to their sons.

The mid-adolescent boys' increasing desire for self-determination of appropriate goals and expectations can be seen as a further indicator of their progression through a practising stage of the separation-individuation process. The differences in parental interactions and expressed expectations described by this subgroup suggest the existence of two different routes through this stage for the adolescent. For the participants in this

subgroup, the adolescent-mother relationship appeared to be more symmetrical with respect to co-construction of expectations and maternal willingness to accept limitations or guidelines as defined by their sons. This interactional structure can be seen as facilitating a process of individuation-in-connection, wherein the boys achieved validation of their own feelings and competence via maternal acceptance. The father-son relationship, on the other hand, appeared more likely to emphasize the differentiation process between the adolescent's and parent's goals or expectations, thereby increasing the likelihood of a separation process being required for increased adolescent self-determination or individuation. Observed in conjunction, these two differing adolescent-parent relationships can be seen as potentially complementary in their impact on adolescent development during the practising and rapprochement stages. The maternal interactions which appeared more responsive to adolescents' experiences can be seen as facilitating the adolescent's regression to a more dependent or symbiotic role. That is, mid-adolescent males may have felt more free to return to their mothers as a secure home base periodically throughout the individuation process. Their fathers' less flexible and apparently greater expectations, on the other hand, may have served to motivate and expand the adolescents' attempts to explore and master their environment, thereby encouraging and facilitating their movement through a practising stage of development as well as counteracting the regressive pull of symbiosis, or the desire to remain attached, which is part of a rapprochement process.

In terms of parental expectations regarding their son's future success in becoming mature, well-functioning individuals, the mothers and fathers in this subgroup were universally positive. All anticipated that their sons would eventually achieve personal and financial independence from their parents and would demonstrate responsible judgment and a mature, decentered interpersonal perspective and world view. The parents' responses to their sons' anticipated departure from home commonly involved a sense of loss or loneliness but was otherwise generally positive. A slight difference in the expectations of mothers and fathers was evident however. Mothers were slightly more

likely to describe expectations for ongoing closeness and involvement with their sons and anticipated that the sons might return home for support or assistance. One mother, for example, when asked how she might feel and react when her son left home to live on his own replied,

> I'm going to really miss him. I am going to be terribly lonely without him, I know that, but I hope that I can be big and brave and say to him, "Good luck. The door is always open. Anytime you need help or you need to come home or you need anything, we're here for you." But I am going to miss him.

The fathers in this subgroup, on the other hand, also anticipated ongoing caring and affection for their sons, although perhaps within a somewhat less intimate context, as indicated by the following interchange with one father:

> Father: I think between now and four years (from now) there is going to come a gradual decrease in the amount of time we spend with one another. Like, over the next four years he is going to be growing apart. He is still going to be my son, but at the end of four years I don't really expect to know him anymore.
> Interviewer: Why is that?
> Father: I don't know, it is just the way the education system works. It's like when you have a baby you don't know it but by the time it is six you know it. By the time they are 18 you know them, but by the time they are 24 you don't know them. You know them, but you don't know them.
> Interviewer: So he somehow grows away from you?
> Father: Yeah.
> Interviewer: And you think that has something to do with the education system, with the university itself?
> Father: Definitely with university. I would think, anyhow. 'Cause it just seems education, learning, growing apart, I don't know, it all seems to be intertwined.

Although this father attributed his expectation for increased separation to external effects from education and exposure to alternate views, his expectation for greater distancing provides further evidence of a distinction in adolescent-parent relations for this subgroup, in favor of an individuation-in-connection process between mid-adolescent males and their mothers and a separation-individuation process with fathers.

Parenting Style

As noted in previous comments, the mid-adolescent males appeared to have achieved a marked increase in symmetrical reciprocity in relation to their mothers compared to the younger males. This interactional transition can be seen as indicative of a move toward a more authoritative, or democratic, parenting style by the mothers with

respect to their sons. These mothers were prepared to listen to their sons' views and respect their wishes. They demonstrated an active flux and balance between exerting discipline or controls and facilitating the adolescent's attempts at attaining increased independence and influence. The fathers also demonstrated some increase in authoritative interactions, but remained comparatively more authoritarian in their parenting style. They were more inclined to assume the role of expert or authority in communications and were less likely to self-disclose in conversations with their sons. They established unilateral expectations for their sons' achievements and were perceived as less responsive to or available for verbal interactions with the boys. This apparently greater distance or separation between fathers and mid-adolescent males may be transient, as noted by one boy:

> I think after I've been out on my own for a few years, out of the university and living, then we'll be closer because I'll have had some of the same experiences and I'll be able to say "Gee, I understand now." But as it is, I really can't say I understand him. I don't know as much about him as I do my mom. I know the basics but that's about it.

For the present mid-adolescent male subgroup, however, the observed differences in maternal and paternal parenting styles supported previous observations of two different routes in the adolescent-parent separation-individuation process: an individuation in-connection process in the adolescent-mother relationship; and a separation-individuation process in the adolescent-father relationship.

3. Adolescent Influences

Peer Relationships

As with the early adolescent males, there was very little mention of peers or friends in the phenomenological descriptions of the adolescent-parent relationship for the mid-adolescent male subgroup. However, comments from the semi-structured interviews of both parents and adolescents indicated that all three boys in this subgroup had experienced or were experiencing some difficulties in peer interactions. All three boys were high academic achievers and they and their parents saw this as having contributed at

least in part to poor acceptance by peers in previous years, although an apparent transition in attitudes had been experienced in this regard: As one adolescent described it,

> Our society at school is very screwed up. You get your cool guys and you get your "nerds" if you want to call them that. People who get good marks and whatnot. And, well, just this year I'm finally getting into being accepted by everybody. All the cool guys are being rejected sort of. Something must be happening.

A second mid-adolescent, describing similar experiences explained the increased acceptance from his peers in the following way:

> You know I think we've just, we've finally realized that we're people, we're graduating, just getting to know each other, and that's a shame. They're trying to get to know these people better in the short time they have. It's really interesting that way because, you know, everyone is getting close now.

These two mid-adolescent boys who were approaching the end of their high school years both perceived their peers as having become suddenly more tolerant of individual differences and more cognizant of academic achievement as a personal strength deserving admiration and respect. A third mid-adolescent male who was just in his first year of high school had not yet experienced this transition in peer acceptance, and consequently attempted to downplay his academic achievements around his peers. According to his father,

> Father: He doesn't have any friends. Part of the problem is his marks. That's not easy to live with (during sports activities) or anything. He handles that well. He says, "I failed that." Sometimes I wish he wouldn't do that 'cause that really adds fuel...
> Interviewer: He pretends that he did fail or something?
> Father: Yeah, if he got a lesser mark.

For the boys in this subgroup then, there did appear to be evidence supporting an increase in adolescent-peer interactions, acceptance and attachment toward the end of the mid-adolescent period. At least two of the adolescents had begun spending more time with peers and felt accepted as equals. These changes in adolescent-peer relationships appear to reflect some notable cognitive and social developments during this stage, including reduced egocentrism, increasingly abstract cognition and greater orientation toward thoughts of future plans and possibilities. Far from supplanting adolescent-parent closeness, however, these increased peer interactions occurred in conjunction with ongoing

closeness and involvement with parents. Moreover, all three mid-adolescent males continued to prefer parental advice and guidance over that of friends and were more likely to discuss important concerns or problems with their parents. Thus parent and peer closeness for this subgroup did not appear to be mutually exclusive as intimated by some theorists (Blos, 1967, Freud, 1958). Nor did adolescents necessarily first experience symmetrical reciprocity in interpersonal relationships with peers as hypothesized by Youniss and Smollar (1985). For two of the boys interviewed, increased symmetrical reciprocity in the mother-son relationship had preceeded the transition to more intimate peer relationships. In terms of the separation-individuation process then, these two boys demonstrated increased involvement in peer relationships, as would be expected in a practising phase of individuation, but did not describe a concommittant separation process with respect to both parents. Instead they appeared to be capable of developing increasingly symmetrical interactions with their mothers as well as with friends during the practising phase of their individuation process.

Cognitive Development

As noted in the previous section, a definite transition in cognitive and social development appeared to occur during mid-adolescence for the boys in this study. In comparison to the early adolescents these three boys demonstrated a marked increase in abstract reasoning, social interests and conversations. Their interest in current affairs, politics and world events had been largely absent in the younger adolescents, and they appeared more likely to engage in mental examination and questioning of ideas, values or attitudes. As one mother described her son, "He likes you to give him questions or whatever, to think about. Thought provoking, things like that. I think he likes a challenge." This evidence of increasing hypothetical and abstract thinking processes in mid-adolescent males reflects their development of formal reasoning processes and reinforces observations that the boys have attained an understanding and differentiation of the views and traits of others, particularly of their parents. Evidence of the mid-adolescents' insights into their parents' underlying motives or personal needs, for

example, included one boy's identification of his father's self-protection in denying his son access to a competitive sport. "He (dad) says that 'You'll only get hurt,' but I know that *he* doesn't want to get hurt, because my brother quit and it really hurt – broke his heart, because my brother didn't continue playing and he doesn't want that to happen – happen to him again." Another mid-adolescent male seemed extremely perceptive regarding his parents' needs or feelings in describing his relationship with his mother:

> I somewhat understand what she's going through with the others, with life in general, so when she's got something she wants to say, I can understand to a degree and sympathize. So I guess that helps her. Someone to talk to besides my dad. I guess it gives her another outlook. It's like for her, being a teenager all over again because she gets to see everying through my eyes once more and she gets to see what's going on and she goes "Yeah that happened to me and that happened to me."

and with his father:

> (He has) some days when he just really gets down on himself. Things around here seem to be getting a little too much for him and he just kind of withdraws from us on those days. He just gets really quiet. And those are the days you just have to be around and you're just there. It lets him know someone cares.

This latter adolescent, in discussing his ability to comprehend and respect his parents' psychological perspectives, demonstrated a cognitive developmental process that Piaget called decentered thinking (1965), or role-taking ability. This adolescent's altruistic concern and support for his parents, however, appeared to reflect a relatively uncommon incidence of decentered thinking at mid-adolescence. The three boys most often described interpersonal insights which reflected an underlying egocentric motivation to understand or influence how they personally might be affected in a situation.

Further evidence of the underlying egocentricity of mid-adolescent's thought processes was observed in their opinionated attitudes or adherence to relatively narrow-minded or poorly thought-out views. Adolescents and parents in this subgroup both described the boys' tendency to get into heated arguments at home and at school, sometimes over insignificant or irrelevant issues. One adolescent was cognizant of this trait in his peers, but appeared to project or be unaware of his own similar characteristics:

Gary: I go to school with quite a mix of people and they're all very opinionated

and very very sure that they're right. And I've got different things I will say "no, you're wrong." I've been told literally, where I can take my ideas.
Interviewer: So your friends aren't willing to listen to your points of view, if they're different?
Gary: They will. They will listen to me, if I hammer it at them and sometimes voluntarily. But you know, most times they are concerned with their own views and you just (think) "Uh Uh, you say that and I know what's going on, so I'll just let you talk."

Based on the cognitive developmental level observed in the mid-adolescent males, they appeared to have passed through a stage of differentiation of the psychological perspectives of parents and others, into a practising stage in which they were exploring and espousing some of these attitudes and values as their own.

The boys' identity statuses (from Table 3 on page 112) reflected this process of identification with parental views (foreclosed identity) or ongoing struggle with ideological and personal choices (moratorium). The mid-adolescent males did not, however, demonstrate a sufficient level of self-evaluation and understanding to acknowledge their own personal fallibility or vulnerability. This acknowledgement can be presumed to be a prerequisite to the adolescent's recognition of the negative aspects of psychological detachment from parents, which in turn would motivate a desire to maintain a more harmonious and intimate connection with the parents. Thus, the mid-adolescent males appeared to be operating generally within the practising phase of the separation-individuation process and had not yet fully experienced the conflicting drives for independence and attachment of the rapprochement stage, although some features of rapprochement were observed in adolescent-parent conflicts.

4. Inter-Relationship Transitions

In general, the participants in this subgroup saw their interrelationships as relatively stable or exhibiting little change from the past. Matthew and his parents did mention that some improvements had occurred in their parent-son relationships since Mr. M. stopped drinking. Matthew appeared to be able to express his feelings, especially anger, to his father more openly, and was less inclined to vent his emotions on his mother. His behavioral change

Table 3

Adolescent identity statuses and participants' overall satisfaction with their interrelationships

Subgroup	Age	Identity Status	Overall satisfaction with relationship			
			Adol.[1] re: mother	Adol. re: father	Mother re: adol.	Father re: adol.
Early adol. male	12	diffused	yes	yes	yes	yes (but wants to spend more time with him)
Early adol. male	12	diffused	yes	yes	yes	yes
Early adol. female	14	diffused	yes	yes	yes	yes
Early adol. female	13	diffused/foreclosed	yes	yes	yes	yes
Mid-adol. male	15	foreclosed[2]	yes	yes	yes	yes (getting better)
Mid-adol. male	16	diffused/foreclosed	yes	no (father overly critical)	yes	yes
Mid-adol. male	17	moratorium	yes	yes (but wants more time to communicate)	yes	yes
Mid-adol. female	15	moratorium/achieved[2]	yes	yes	no (dissatisfied with her own time input)	yes
Mid-adol. female	15	moratorium/diffused	yes	yes	yes	yes
Late adol. male	18	moratorium	no (dissatisfied with his own effort)	no (wants more intimacy)	yes	yes
Late adol. male	19	moratorium	yes	yes	yes	yes
Late adol. female	18	moratorium	yes	yes	no (wants daugher to be more open)	yes
Late adol. female	18	moratorium/achieved	no (wants more understanding)	no (wants more communication)	yes	yes

[1]Adol. = adolescent
[2]This adolescent's identity status is susceptible to press, that is, it appears easily influenced to change.

may reflect a developmental process in Matthew, but, from the family's perspective, the transition was clearly linked to improvements in the home situation. Besides this one instance of improved interpersonal closeness due to parental changes, the mid-adolescent males generally did not report a transition in their parent-son relationships. Two of the boys did, however, report increased interest and involvement in peer relationships within the past year. One of the boys additionally expressed an awareness of changes in himself that could reasonably be expected to influence parent-son interactions, although he maintained that the relationship had remained relatively constant. Gary described himself as being different from the past in that,

> I listen more. I'm more concerned with (my mother's) needs, what she needs to do and, you know, when she wants to be alone and whatnot... When she's feeling tired I know to leave her alone and I know I can tell when she's had a hard day. So I'm fairly sensitive in that matter, so I just "okay, you want to be alone, I'll leave you alone. If you just want to take half an hour and sleep, I'll keep everybody quiet while you sleep, or I'll take the dog out because he likes to bark all the time." You know, I can tell when she wants someone to talk to, so I'll come and talk or play cards and then she gets talking.

Of the three mid-adolescent males, Gary was the only one who demonstrated this degree of self-evaluative reflection, in terms of recognizing a personal developmental transition.

The parents in this subgroup perceived slightly more development and interactional changes in their sons during recent years. Their comments illustrate the nature of these changes:

> Mrs. G.: I think if anything, if it has changed at all, we probably talk more. There was a period when he was between ages oh, 10 and 13 maybe, where we didn't talk as much because their friends were the most important thing and he was involved with (group activities), and he had so many things going, I think he just didn't have the time. But as he got older and, you know, was finished with (those activities) and had - spends more time at home, sometimes I think the opportunities arise to talk and I think, ah, really I don't think our relationship has changed a lot, we've always talked and always gotten along fairly well.

> Mr. D.: When he was 13, he started talking more, like man-things, you know... He just started talking more to me and, you know, he still talks to his mom and everything, but it's, he's starting to come to me for things and helping me. In being interested in going out with him sometimes, in having a look at my vehicles. He wants to learn, he wants to be there, and things like that, that's the way it changed.

> Mrs. M.: I would say I used to nag him a lot more three years ago. Now he more or less does his own thing. He doesn't stretch the limits a heck of a lot. There's always this or that, his dad is after him more than I am to get his things done sooner or to - probably about the only time I nag him now is when he is sleeping in till noon on

> Saturdays, but I think that, like three years ago, there was a lot more to nag him about and I don't think there is as much now. He kind of has taken responsibility for his own person and his own things he is involved in.

From the preceding comments, it appears that some inter-relationship transitions did occur between mid-adolescent males and their parents. Reports of their increasing verbal communications, and the mid-adolescents' growing personal responsibility and diversifying interests are all indicative of the mid-adolescents' progression into a practising phase of individual development. The observation that at least two of the adolescents, however, were not cognizant of these changes in themselves suggests that they had not yet achieved a capacity for objective self-evaluation comparable to their differentiated awareness of parents and others. Thus, presuming that this differentiation and objective assessment of self is a prerequisite for developing an awareness of negative aspects of psychological detachment from parents, it appears that these two mid-adolescent males had not yet attained the cognitive-perceptual skills required for the evolution of a rapprochement crisis. Only Gary, who coincidentally was the eldest mid-adolescent male at 17 years, clearly demonstrated a rudimentary assessment of his own psychological development. For the present subgroup of boys, then, it appears that the rapprochement phase of a separation-individuation process was only beginning to emerge toward the end of the mid-adolescent years.

Summary

The mid-adolescent males in this study had generally attained a differentiated view of their parents as complex individuals with human failings and virtues. The younger male adolescents' views that parents were omnipotent and omniscient were no longer evident in this subgroup. Occasional attempts to reattain a more symbiotic interactional level between adolescent and parent, however, reflected the ongoing nature of the differentiation process and the adolescents' need to check back to a familiar home base.

Despite some ongoing differentiation activities, the relationships between mid-adolescent males and their parents were largely indicative of a practising phase in their separation-individuation processes. The three boys demonstrated their increasing

independence, competence and involvement in the external world via their increased participation in social and sports activities, their interest in ideological issues and their involvement with transitional objects, like motor vehicles. Verbal communication of information and opinions became much more important than shared activities as a focal point for adolescent-parent interactions.

Interactions between mid-adolescent males and their parents reflected an overall reduction in the relational structure of unilateral authority. However, differences were noted for transitions in maternal versus paternal relationships. Fathers maintained more unilateral authority with respect to their sons, whereas mother-son interactions reflected a greater degree of symmetrical reciprocity in shared activities and communications. The observed differences in mother-son and father-son relationships during mid-adolescence supported observations from the early adolescent female subgroup which suggested the existence of two potential routes for adolescent development within the adolescent-parent relationship. The first route, observed in the male mid-adolescent-father relationship, reflected a separation-individuation process. It incorporated increasing separation between the adolescent and his father as a result of limited self-disclosures, resistance to paternal controls and increased emphasis of individual differences. The second route represented an individuation-in-connection process in which adolescents enhanced their sense of personal competence and interpersonal influence by means of increased symmetrical reciprocity and ongoing connection with their mothers. The mothers in this subgroup demonstrated a more authoritative, democratic parenting style and seemed generally more responsive to their son's changing needs or views than their spouses did.

It was not possible to determine whether the differences noted between mother-adolescent relationships and father-adolescent relationships in this subgroup reflected idiosyncratic characteristics of the participant sample or offered a more representative depiction of transitions in adolescent-parent relationships. Observed in conjunction, however, the existence of two distinct and different routes for adolescent development represented potential flexibility and adaptability of the individuation process. The differences in maternal and paternal roles and interactions were seen as mutually complementary for this subgroup,

such that increased symmetrical reciprocity between the boys and their mothers facilitated "safe" exploration and growth within a secure relationship, while the father's separation-inducing interactions and expectations encouraged increasing independence and autonomy.

The mid-adolescent male subgroup provided further evidence of flexibility in adolescent development via the bidirectional movement observed in one adolescent-father relationship. This adolescent and father had not experienced strong interrelational symbiosis prior to mid-adolescence and the differentiation phase of development. The pair subsequently returned to a more symbiotic interactional level, however, as a result of their mutual desire and effort to attain increased closeness. A second mid-adolescent who had missed this symbiosis with his father, however, demonstrated an interpersonal separation and wholesale rejection of paternal influence which exemplified the parental rejection described by "turmoil" theorists of adolescent development (Blos, 1967, 1979; Freud, 1958). This mid-adolescent-father relationship was the only example of such total abrogation and separation, however. All other mid-adolescent-parent relationships were characterized by ongoing closeness and connection between the parent and adolescent.

The need for caution in interpreting results of adolescent research with deviant sample groups is evident from the above observations. Observations drawn from families with a history of personal or interpersonal problems may distort or accentuate the severity of separation processes during adolescent development. The present research sample suggested that, contrary to theoretical formulations based on deviant subjects, a severe adolescent-parent separation process was neither inevitable nor even common for mid-adolescent males. Moreover, it suggested that interpersonal separation due to relational difficulties or lack of symbiosis might still be reversed during the mid-adolescent period via a return to more symbiotic interactions.

D. Mid-Adolescent Females

1. Adolescent-Parent Interactions

Shared Activities

The two mid-adolescent females placed very little emphasis on shared activities in their phenomenological descriptions of their adolescent-parent relationships. In fact they practically omitted this topic altogether until later in the interview when they were specifically asked to describe the activities they shared with their parents. According to their responses to this question, the general form of the interactions between mid-adolescent daughters and their parents did not differ remarkably from those described by the younger girls. They included both instrumental (shopping, tasks around the house, homework) and recreational (sports, watching T.V., playing catch) pursuits. They involved symmetrical activities like listening to music or jogging together and asymmetrical activies like driving lessons. Both girls did mention that they had experienced some reduction in the amount of time spent in shared activities, particularly with their fathers, as a result of their own increased involvement in extra-familiar pursuits like committee work or peer group activities. This reduction in shared activities might be seen as indicative of a beginning process of separation from parental involvement and increased involvement with peers. Yet, as with the mid-adolescent males, to view the process as active rejection of interactions with parents appears too harsh an interpretation, considering the extent of involvement remaining between these parents and daughters. They appeared to continue to seek out each other's company and enjoy joint involvement in mutual activities as much as possible in view of the daughters' expanding social worlds.

The lack of emphasis on shared activities in the mid-adolescent daughters' phenomenological descriptions of the relationship with their parents thus appears better interpreted as a transformation of the adolescent-parent relationship, rather than as evidence of the adolescents' emancipation from it. These girls appeared to be developing

increasing extra-familiar involvement in conjunction with, rather than in place of, parental relationships. Moreover, the decreased emphasis on shared activities with parents occurred in conjunction with a marked increase in emphasis on shared verbal communication, as described in the following section, which suggests once again the existence of a transformational process rather than abrogation of the relationship. For the mid-adolescent females, then, the observed reduction in shared parent-daughter activities and increased peer interactions reflected the two girls' transition to a practising phase of the separation-individuation process.

Verbal Communications

Verbal communications between mid-adolescent females and their parents represented a very integral and important feature of the interrelationships of this subgroup. All family members experienced overall open, candid conversations which facilitated mutual understanding and enhanced a feeling of closeness in the relationships despite a reduction in shared activites. All but one parent in this subgroup felt that their daughters would discuss any concerns or problems with them. This father indicated that his daughter would likely turn more to her mother to discuss school problems and serious relationships. His perceptions were verified by his daughter's comments. Both of the mid-adolescent girls in fact described their tendency to discuss certain topics of conversation more with the parent who was perceived to be most interested or knowledgeable in that subject. For one girl this meant discussing sports mostly with her father and school work with her mother, while the other girl consulted her father more for help with school work. Both girls reported a tendency to avoid discussing more personal problems or heterosexual relationships with their fathers. The mid-adolescent females thus appeared to have established a relatively stable differentiation of each parent's role for self disclosures which seemed at least partly constrained by gender identification. As a result, some distancing or separation was observed in father-daughter self-disclosures or advice seeking.

The extent of interrelational separation experienced between mid-adolescent daughters and their parents was modified, however, by the degree of symmetrical reciprocity experienced in verbal communications. Both girls experienced a slightly closer relationship with the parent who was perceived as accepting them more as equals and exerting fewer authoritarian controls. For example, Kathy K. (aged 15 years) described her relationship with her dad as "pretty good," whereas her relationship with her mother was "really good," because she could "talk about everything under the sun" with her mother. Kathy's description of her verbal communications with her mother exemplified the concept of symmetrical reciprocity particularly well. She observed that,

> (My mother) talks to me as if I'm an equal, like a friend, instead of just her daughter ... I think it's better that way being a friend 'cause, like, I look up to her but yet I do that because she talks to me and it makes me feel important that she thinks of me as an adult, that she can tell me what is going on in her head. And I think it's important that if she wants me to talk to her and tell her my feelings and stuff that she should be able to talk to me and tell me her feelings and what's going on with her too.

Regarding her father, Kathy stated,

> Some subjects I can talk to my dad, like easier to talk about. But not - don't get into specific details. Like I'll talk to him about what happens at school or people I'm with and stuff but I don't really go into the specifics but I'm mostly - our relationship is with sports or things concerning sports or things like that because he is still into that or fitness, so that's mostly what we talk about.

The second mid-adolescent female, Anne A. (aged 15 years) experienced more symmetrical reciprocity in her verbal interactions with her father:

> I can talk to him about anything and he'll listen. He's a very good listener. He'll always listen to whatever you have to say, when you're finished he offers his opinion. He doesn't go 'Well you should have done that and you shouldn't have done that.' And he uses humour a lot. His humour is helpful, gives you insight sort of.

than with her mother:

> She can cut you down with her tongue so fast. ... She wouldn't hesitate to tell anyone that "What you are doing is wrong." She doesn't go out of her way and say "That is horrible. How could you do that!" She lets people make mistakes. She lets them find out on their own somethings.

For the latter family, the separation-inducing effects of a differentiation process which restricted certain topics of discussion in father-dauther relationships appeared to be moderated somewhat in the practicing phase of adolescent development by increased

symmetrical reciprocity and a non-authoritarian parenting style. Thus, although father-daughter relationships may generally display greater separation than mother-daughter communications during adolescence, as suggested by Youniss and Smollar (1985), individual parent-daughter relationships may reflect much greater ongoing closeness and connection than was observed in Youniss and Smollar's overview of their sample.

Also, contrary to previous research which described mid-adolescents' preference for self-disclosure or sharing confidences with peers rather than parents (Josselson, 1977a, 1977b), both girls in this subgroup relegated peers to a lesser role for such communication. Mid-adolescent daughters preferred to ask their mother or an older sibling for help with problems, but they generally accepted any advice or help offered by fathers as well as that from mothers or siblings. Assistance from friends was less likely to be accepted unquestioningly. Friends were described as "less experienced" and "one sided" whereas parents were seen as more trustworthy, less likely to divulge confidences and more capable of dealing with major problems.

Conflict

Conflicts between the mid-adolescent females and their parents were not discussed much in the phenomenological relationship description, but were generally attributed to parental expectations or interpersonal affect more than to specific misbehaviors or disagreement. For example, Anne and her mother experienced friction over what they saw as "minor things" like doing chores or tidyness, but they recognized that this was not really detrimental to their relationship, and that their individual moods or experiences of the day could precipitate disagreements. Anne stated: "I think its not going to kill me if I fight with my mother a little, like arguing sometimes when she has had a bad day. That could be some of the reasons we will fight or I have had a bad day or something like that," Anne indicated that she would generally reflect on the disagreement afterward and usually regretted her own part in it and acknowledged her mother's good intentions: "she knows what she is talking about when she does something and she does it to help, she doesn't do it to hurt." Both mid-adolescent females expressed this faith in their parents'

good intentions and generally greater wisdom. Their ultimate capitulation to parental judgment indicated that a form of complementary reciprocity and unilateral parental authority extended into mid-adolescent-parent relationships. However, this form of the relational structure for mid-adolescent females differed markedly from the symbiotic interactions observed in early adolescence. Unlike the early adolescents' unquestioning acceptance of parental omniscience and omnipotence, the two girls in this subgroup demonstrated a differentiated awareness of their parents as complex and fallible individuals. Both girls carefully evaluated their parents' actions and advice in light of their own personal values or needs and actively decided to co-operate with their parents and to limit or reduce interrelationship conflicts. As well, both girls were aware of their own ability to influence or affect their parents or to increase or reduce conflict in the relationship between them. For example, both girls were conscious of ways in which they might hurt their parents' feelings, and both expressed a desire to avoid doing so. Kathy reported that she would often not go along with social activities if she sensed that her father was uncomfortable with them, even when he had given her permission to do so, because

> it's important what he thinks. If he's upset, like in the morning if I did something and he's upset all day I think "Oh no. What am I going to do." Like if he's upset I won't do it again or else it's really important to make sure that he's happy.

Anne was also sensitive to her father's feelings, stating "he wants his family to succeed and I think it hurts him when he doesn't succeed. Like he really feels like 'Oh my God, my child didn't succeed!', but he doesn't hold that against you." The two girls' ability to understand and consider their parents' reactions as determinants of their own behaviors clearly indicated their attainment of a highly differentiated evaluation of the parental love object. In addition, however, their self-evaluation from a less egocentric perspective was demonstrated in the girls' efforts to anticipate and attain their parents' expectations. Their behavior was indicative of increasing differentiation-of-self at the mid-adolescent female level, compared to earlier subgroups. Their departure from the relative egocentricity, feelings of personal omnipotence and highly opinionated views

observed in earlier subgroups represents a developmental change which is presumed to be necessary for the adolescent's entry to the rapprochement stage of a separation-individuation process. This self-differentiation represented the girls' growing awareness of their own separateness and individuality. According to theories of adolescent development (Blos, 1967; Erikson, 1968) such awareness is commonly attained only after a period of adolescent-parental conflict and detachment, which presumably occurs during the practising stage of separation-individuation. One of the mid-adolescent females definitely experienced a period of heightened conflict with her parents at age 13 or 14. She attributed its onset to negative peer influences (Her experiences will be examined further in that section.). Her parents' supportive attitude when she got into some trouble with her peer group helped her to achieve a more differentiated self-awareness. This in turn, attributed to a resolution of the adolescent-parent conflict and a transition to more symmetrical interactions between them, according to the daughter:

> That kind of opened the relationship so, like, so that before I thought I had to hide things from them, 'cause I thought like I was Little Miss Perfect and I always did everything right. And I think they realized and so did I, that I could talk to them about it and stuff. So that changed our relationship a lot this year and straightened everything out so I didn't need to do that stuff and just sneak out and do that kind of thing anymore 'cause I could talk to them about it.

The second mid-adolescent female did not experience such a dramatic transition in relational conflicts with her parents, but did describe a period of minor rebellion at about age 11 ("I would swear and my friends would say 'Oh! That's Anne swearing!'"). She also described her own more differentiated view of herself, however, as contributing to reduced conflict with her parents:

> I've grown up a lot because I was such a brat ... I was horrible and cruel to my sisters ... I'd sort of avoid what work (my mother) wanted me to do ... I find myself now doing things that will make my mother happy, like doing the dishes this morning... I think I got to the point where I just sort of thought "people don't really want me around if I'm going to be a brat."

For both mid-adolescent females, then, there appeared to have been a period of increased conflict and distancing between parents and daughter, although the extent of the conflict varied for the two girls and for each of their parents. The resolution of this intergenerational conflict seemed to begin with each girl's acknowledgement of her own

imperfections and concurrent recognition of her parents' ability to accept and support her despite these failings. This sequence of separation or distancing from parental controls, recognition of personal limitations or self-differentiation, followed by attempts to return to a more harmonious relationship with a renewed desire for parental understanding, acceptance and support reflects the conflicting drives for re-established closeness and increasing independence which are indicative of a rapprochement stage in the separation-individuation process.

2. Parental Influences

Parental Expectations

The parents of mid-adolescent females emphasized process goals, especially honesty, slightly more than specific outcome goals for their daughters. The two girls viewed this increased focus on effort rather than results as important to the quality of the adolescent-parent relationship, as demonstrated in the following exchange:

> Interviewer: Is there any other thing that you can tell me about your relationship with your mom to help me really understand what it is like?
> Kathy: I don't feel that I have to please her as much as my dad. Like, my dad, it seems like he is really concerned with my marks and how well I do and everything, and my mom's just concerned that I try my best. So I like it better that I don't have to, like, I almost don't have to prove myself to her, whereas I think I do with my dad sometimes. Especially when it comes to school... (my dad will) compare me to other girls in school that are really smart, whereas my mom won't do that and I'm glad. Like, I don't like being compared, 'cause we're not the same. The people that he compares me to, we're not alike at all. So I'm glad she doesn't do that. Even when I get my report card or whatever she won't really look at the marks, she'll just look at the comments, you know, and if I get comments that she's happy with. And my dad doesn't-really look at the comments he just looks at the marks. Just – oh it's better.

Kathy's perspective of the differences between her mother's and father's expectations of her reflected the importance she placed on parental acceptance of her individuality and self-definition. As noted previously, her unhappiness with her father's high expectations resulted in mild conflicts and slight distancing or separation between the two, according to Kathy's comments. Mr. K. did not fully share his daughter's perspective, however, stating:

> We've had good rapport. She understands I have high expectations, to the point where I expect her to do fairly well. Not beyond what I think she's capable of. I may ask her to do a little bit more, demand a little bit more of her because I think she's capable of doing it, but I think she thrives on that.

Mr. K.'s comments suggest that he is unaware of, or discounts, his daughter's discomfort with these high expectations. It does appear from this that some distancing had occurred in father-daughter communications. However, Mr. K. also emphasized the increased effort and achievement which his daughter might attain due to his high expectations. His view supports the researcher's previous speculation that interrelational separation due to high parental expectations may serve to accelerate or enhance the practicing stage of individuation during adolescent development. For both girls in mid-adolescence, however, their parents' acceptance of their individuation via self-determination and self-definition was preferred over this more directive influence.

Youniss and Smollar (1985) also commented on the importance of parental responsiveness to and acceptance of adolescents' self-perceived limitations. They indicated that, in general, fathers were less likely to demonstrate this form of interaction than mothers. However, this observation does not apply in all cases in the present sample. In Anne's family, for example, her father was described as extremely open and accepting. She stated,

> He'll be there and he'll just sort of accept you. He treats you like a person. He doesn't put that pressure on you to be good, he puts expectations on you to try to succeed but he doesn't expect you to be Joe Athlete or Joe Brain or whatever. He really likes you to do, whatever it is, he expects you to do your best.

All parents and adolescents in this subgroup anticipated ongoing closeness in their interrelationships in the future. Parents from both families were confident that their daughters would successfully achieve a mature, individuated status as adults. Their definitions of maturity included the daughters' ability to accept responsibility for their actions, become independent of parental assistance, and make common-sense or rational decisions. The two families differed, however, in the parents' ratings of their daughters' present maturity level. An interaction was observed between the adolescents' birth order and parental evaluations of maturity, as well as parental expectations regarding

consequences to themselves of separation.

Anne, the youngest child in her family, was described as somewhat behind her peers, at least in social development. Her father noted, "Well, I think she's still, ah, maybe younger than her peer group in as far as she doesn't date boys yet..." Kathy's father, on the other hand, rated his eldest child "at fifteen as being fairly grown up compared to most 15 year old girls" and her mother noted "I would consider her as mature. As mature as many people my own age, but without the background experience." As noted in the early adolescent males' results, these differing perceptions of oldest and youngest offspring may be influenced by parents' differences regarding anticipated consequences of their child leaving home. Anne's parents both experienced distress at the thought of their youngest daughter leaving home. Her mother's expectations of a strong negative personal impact are illustrated in the following exchange:

> Interviewer: How do you think you will feel and react when Anne leaves home to live on her own?
> Mrs. A.: I think I'll be devastated. (laughs)
> Interviewer: Why?
> Mrs. A.: I'd say she's, um, you know I just think that, um, it's going to be hard to accept - my baby moving, just moving away. (laughs) I'm very possessive with my children.
> Interviewer: Do you think it will be much harder with Anne than the others?
> Mrs. A.: Yes, I do.

Anne's father also anticipated negative reactions to his daughter's departure, and added that he and his wife might consequently try to maintain closer ties with their youngest child after her departure.

> Interviewer: How do you think that you're going to feel and react when Anne leaves home to live on her own?
> Mr. A.: I think that I'd handle it. (laughs) Ah, I think it will be hard because she is the youngest of the group. I think it will - if she is the last one of them to leave home, I think, ah, we'll probably be a little lonely for a while and I think we may interfere in her life a little more than we should because of that, but, ah, I think it will be hard when she leaves.

Both of Kathy's parents expected a similar but less intense, emotional response to their daughter's departure from home. Mrs. K. stated "If I know that its something that she wants and it's a secure move that she's making, a responsible move that she's prepared for, I'll be fine. I'll be lonesome but I'll be fine." Mr. K felt that he would

> probably (be) upset in a way. You know, you raise someone from day one, you see them grow, go through changes, I think it will be hard to let go ... Both my wife and I are going to have to come to the realization that the baby is no longer a baby and she's gone. And hopefully that will make things easier for us when she gets older. To realize that she is getting older and she has to do her own thing.

For Kathy's parents, thoughts about adolescent-parent separation appeared to be more easily accepted than in Anne's family. It seems likely that the differing parental attitudes regarding separation would influence adolescent-parent interactions in these two families. Observations regarding interrelationship conflict and parenting style did provide some evidence that Kathy had undergone a period of marked conflict and distancing from her parents but subsequently attained increased symmetrical reciprocity in these relationships, especially with her mother who was perceived as less authoritarian. Anne had experienced only very minor interrelationship conflicts with her parents, but did not appear to have attained the depth of self disclosure and symmetrical reciprocity in adolescent-parent communications that Kathy and her mother described. These results support speculations that parents' negative expectations regarding future separation may inhibit or modify the adolescent separation process during the practising phase of development.

It was not possible to determine whether parental expectations and adolescent birth order influenced the adolescent separation-individuation process at a later stage based on the present sample, as none of the late adolescents was a youngest child. For participants in the early and mid-adolescent subgroups, however, there appeared to be an interactive effect on the separation-individuation process from factors like parenting style, parents' anticipated responses to adolescent separation, and adolescents' birth order. The present research does not provide a full investigation of the nature and extent of the influence of such variables, but does serve to illustrate the need to consider these factors when examining the adolescent-parent relationship and the separation-individuation process. Further research, particularly utilizing a longitudinal design, would be of interest in evaluating these interactions.

Parenting Style

As noted previously, differences in the parenting style of the mid-adolescents' mothers and fathers affected the structure of the adolescent-parent relationship as well as the adolescents' relative satisfaction with the relationship. All mid-adolescents expressed a preference for a more authoritative relationship with greater symmetrical reciprocity. However, while only mothers had demonstrated primarily authoritative parenting techniques in the male subgroup, and fathers had maintained more authoritarian controls, the parents of the mid-adolescent females did not demonstrate such gender-specific differences.

Anne described her father as the more authoritative parent who was accepting and supportive of his family and exerted his influence in a non-authoritarian manner. She stated, "He'll always listen to whatever you have to say and when you're finished he offers his opinion. He doesn't go 'Well, you should have done that and you shouldn't have done that!'" Anne's mother, on the other hand, was more inclined to retain a position of unilateral authority with respect to voicing her own opinions ("she is very strong in her beliefs and her faith and wouldn't hesitate to tell someone that what you are doing is wrong") and taking the role of omnipotent parent, according to Anne ("That sort of bugs me about my mom – when she is wrong she never says she's sorry. You can tell that she's sorry but she doesn't say the words and that bugs me a lot.").

Kathy's parents reversed these roles. Her father was the more authoritarian parent who was inclined to impose his own expectations on her behavior and with his use of a raised voice or complex terminology, was capable of intimidating Kathy into acquiescence. Kathy's mother, on the other hand, was perceived as more accepting and cognizant of Kathy's perspective or desires, that is, more authoritative or democratic in her parenting style.

Despite the observed parenting differences within families in this subgroup, however, the mid-adolescent females' parents as a whole demonstrated largely authoritative, or democratic, parenting techniques. They encouraged interactive

discussions and age-appropriate decision-making by their daughters, yet retained the role of ultimate authority and control when necessary. The relational structure within this subgroup thus reflected a transition toward increasing symmetrical reciprocity, but still with an undercurrent of unilateral parental authority when parents deemed it necessary. Kathy's mother described this interactional dichotomy in her comments:

> I want to be seen as receptive. And I would much rather be seen as, you know, "I'm open to what you have to say" rather than say "I don't care." Because I want her to know, come good, bad or ugly – I mean, everybody makes mistakes and everybody has got to go through it, and that doesn't mean I'm a worry wart forever. But she's got to know that I'm there. They all do. And if I have to tone down some of my thoughts or my comments and my worries then that's what I have to do – because I call her my confidant, but I'm also the adult, you know what I mean? I mean, I have to set the limits of what it is ..."

For the mid-adolescent females, then, the transition to more authoritative parenting techniques may have served to encourage and sanction the girls' progression through a practising phase of the individuation process, but parental influence, involvement and authority were ultimately instrumental in determining acceptable limits to this process.

3. Adolescent Influences

Peer Relationships

Both mid-adolescent females were described by their parents as having good peer relationships, making friends easily, and maintaining one or two very close friendships over long periods of time. As noted previously, the girls appeared to be separating from parental involvement and becoming closer to peers in terms of shared activites, but not with respect to problem disclosures or advice seeking, for which parents and siblings remained the primary source.

Both of the mid-adolescent females described themselves as having undergone a transition with respect to peer relationships in the past year or two. The girls saw themselves as much less likely to be influenced by peer pressures or opinions, and more able to exert their own individuality regardless of peer response. Anne described these

changes in herself, saying:

> I'm more strongly opinionated, and I'm more easily able to express my values. Whereas before I would go for whether or not this would be a popular decision, now I do what is right, I don't do what is popular.

Kathy described a similar experience:

> I think that I've grown up a lot in the last year and I found out that I don't have to do (everything my friends do), and I found I have more friends being myself and that I don't really have to – like, my friends' opinions don't matter as much. Like, other peoples' opinions at school, the kids' opinions, don't matter. I can be myself and if I am happy with the way that I am then that is all that matters.

The two girls' remarks clearly described an individuation process with respect to their peers. Their previous conformity to group pressures had been transformed with the development of self-differentiation and self-confidence to more symmetrical interactions and greater independence in peer relationships.

Anne appeared to experience this transition gradually, largely as a result of her own cognitive processes. Kathy, however, attained a more individuated outlook following a period of separation from the adolescent-parent relationship and increased identification with peers. Her experiences closely resembled the process of rejecting parental authority combined with greater attachment to peers which was described in Blos (1967) and Freud's (1958) depictions of adolescent development. Kathy described her involvement in a new peer relationship as being responsible for her development of a very negative perspective of her parents. According to Kathy,

> In grade 9 I kind of got in with the wrong crowd. This girl came to our school and she wasn't – like I thought she was great, you know. I looked up to her and stuff and so the attitude she had towards her parents, and the way that she acted, it kind of rubbed off on me. And so I thought of my parents that way. That's what changed me in grade 9. And then they told me that they didn't really like (her) and that kind of made me think. Like, at first I thought, "They don't like her, so what! You know, she's my friend. I think she's nice." But then after a while, when I started seeing what she was like, then it occurred to me that they were right. And then in grade 10, at the beginning of this year that's when it all changed after that one incident. Then I could talk to them about everything.

For Kathy, then, the involvement with her new friend developed into a negative peer influence such as that which several parents in previous subgroups had expressed concern about. In Kathy's family, the conflict and separation process which was initiated

by this peer influence was ultimately instrumental in producing increased symmetrical reciprocity and mutual acceptance in the adolescent-parent relationship. The "incident" which Kathy referred to above involved getting into trouble with her peers and finding out that her parents responded in an understanding, non-punishing manner and disclosed similar errors that they had made as teens. The enhanced interrelational closeness and understanding which resulted from this experience appeared to reflect the beginning of a rapprochement phase in the parent-daughter relationship. Kathy and her parents subsequently recognized and accepted each other as independent, fallible individuals, yet sought to remain attached and interdependent within their relationships.

Cognitive Development

The mid-adolescent females were generally similar to the mid-adolescent males with respect to cognitive processes. They had clearly attained a differentiated view of their parents as separate, complex individuals whose personality traits influenced the parent-adolescent relationship and interactions. Anne's descriptions of her mother, for example, included "a very strong Catholic and very strong in her beliefs and her faith," "a very good mother ... very good to her children and she treats her children very, very well." Anne saw her father as "very fun. He's a very outgoing, very nice man. He's a very wonderful person to have as a father. He's funny and he's honest." Her comments reflected an assessment of her parents on external or universal standards, seeing them as individuals in their own right, rather than just in relation to herself, and thus indicated her transition through a differentiation phase of development and a reduction in egocentrism compared to younger adolescents.

As with the males, both mid-adolescent girls also demonstrated an increasing interest in the world around them, including current events and social, political awareness. Their identity statuses, assessed as moratorium-achieved and moratorium-diffused, indicated the cognitive struggle with hypothetical and ideological issues reflected in the moratorium or "in crisis" (Marcia, 1964) identity status. The rating of moratorium-achieved for one girl reflected her rudimentary commitment to

occupational, political and religious choices (although she appeared susceptible to changing these with further experiences or external influences), while the second mid-adolescent female still demonstrated a general lack of commitments in these areas, as represented by her moratorium-diffused rating. The overall interest in and active consideration of such issues by mid-adolescents generally, however, demonstrated their increased interest in the external world, an indicator of their involvement in a practising phase of the separation-individuation process.

The mid-adolescent females demonstrated cognitive developmental progression beyond that of their male counterparts, however, in their increased differentiation of self. Not only did they demonstrate a less egocentric perspective of relationship factors, the two girls also described somewhat greater self-reflective cognition in their ability to express views which differed from their parents' or peers', and in their acknowledgement of personal failings or weaknesses as well as strengths. This self-reflective differentiation and self-acceptance revealed a process of increasing adolescent individuation and concurrently indicated the beginning of a rapprochement phase in adolescent-parent relations. The girls' awareness of their own fallibility and personal limitations fostered a desire for ongoing closeness and attachment to parents. At the same time, the girls' recognition of their personal strengths and increasing experience and competence furthered their desire for independence and autonomy. The coexistence of these two processes would inevitably result in a rapprochement crisis of conflicting desires to remain attached to or separate from parental influences, support and controls.

4. Inter-Relationship Transitions

The general increase in both mid-adolescent girls' self confidence, self-reflective reasoning and independence from the influence of peer opinions or pressures contributed to the adolescent individuation process, both in relation to peers and to parents. A further sense of the transition in adolescent-parent relationships was revealed in the participants' descriptions of increased symmetrical reciprocity in adolescent-parent interactions. Anne's

description of this transition consisted largely of an increase in her mother's ability to trust and rely on her to function independently and effectively. Both Anne and her parents felt that this change resulted from Anne's gradual maturation. They noted that their adolescent-parent relationships had actually changed very little in the past few years, and specifically mentioned the lack of discord or conflict between them. For example, Anne indicated that her relationship with her mother had always remained pretty much the same, noting,

> I think that I haven't had any major rows or major fights and I think that we've always had sort of – I think it's better than it was because I think I've grown up a bit over the last few years but the last couple of years especially.

Anne's father responded similarly when asked if his relationship with his daughter had changed much in the past three years. He stated,

> I don't think so. I don't think it's changed very much at all. I think there were times when we were closer and I suppose times when we were farther apart. A couple of years ago I was helping to coach (her) and we were pretty close at that time. And we always go away together for a while in the summer for a (family) holiday ... You've – got lots of time for everybody then. I don't think that we ever really had any problems between Anne and me.

For Anne and her parents, then, the phenomenological perspective of a transition in their interrelationships reflected a basically stable interpersonal structure with gradual maturational adaptations, but no period of marked conflict or distancing that might signal a traumatic separation process.

Transitions in the interpersonal relationships in Kathy's family were described very differently. Kathy and her parents also achieved increased symmetrical reciprocity in their interactions during this stage, as noted by Mr. K.'s description of the growth process:

> It (our relationship) has grown as Kathy has grown. I guess in the normal ways in that, as a youngster, kids are all take. Their parents can do things for them, you know, they change diapers. There's no appreciataion on their part. But as they grow, they start to realize that mom and dad are really real and they start to add something into the relationship. They start to give back to you. You know, the little things like a kiss goodnight, cards that they've made. I don't know, just all types of little things that they do that makes you feel important as a parent. So that you know that they're giving something back.

For Kathy and her parents, however, these changes did not follow a gradual and relatively smooth maturational process as they had in Anne's family. Instead, Kathy and her parents experienced a period of separation indicated by marked interactional conflict and

distancing and Kathy's increased involvement in peer relationships. Kathy's response to the question "Has your relationship with your dad always been the way it is now?" illustrated her perception of the transitional process. She replied,

> No – last year I used to think my parents were – I didn't thing they knew anything. I thought they were there to make my life difficult. Especially my dad, you know. I know I didn't talk to him. Like, I didn't talk to either of them very much, but I talked to my mom more than my dad, so I kind of pushed him out of the way and I always thought that he was there to ruin everything. Like, he was just strict, you know, and wouldn't let me go anywhere or do anything... Last year was really bad. We didn't have a relationship at all. Before that he was always – he was, like "my daddy." You know, as "my dad" you don't think of anything else really, and he was there to help me with things and just be there. It was just the little girl kind of thing, "my daddy's just there for me," and then in grade 9 it changed and so this year he's more like a friend.

For Kathy the transition from the unilateral authority implicit in being "daddy's little girl" to their symmetrical interactions as "friends" was bridged by her involvement with the "wrong crowd" at school during grade nine. Her progression from the symbiotic parent-daughter relationship through a separation process involving greater investment in peers and interrelational conflicts with parents, to a renewal of communications and affiliation with her parents, clearly paralleled the separation-individuation stages of symbiosis, differentiation, practising and rapprochement described by Mahler. Anne's experiences, on the other hand, did not include a marked separation process during the practising stage, reflecting instead a process of individuation-in-connection with her parents.

Summary

The two mid-adolescent females had clearly attained a differentiated perspective of their parents as indicated by their awareness of how parental characteristics or personality traits might influence the adolescent-parent relationship. The girls also demonstrated an increasing interest in and exploration of the world around them. They were much more conscious of political issues, social concerns and future career options than the younger girls had been. Their involvement in more diverse activities, often with peers, resulted in a reduction in the amount of time spent in shared activities with parents. The waning of adolescent-parent activities, however, was combined with a generally increased focus on verbal

communications between the adolescents and their parents. As with the mid-adolescent males, the girls' increased exploration of their world and other people, and their diversification of interpersonal relationships were indicators of their progression through a practising phase of a separation-individuation process. Unlike the boys, however, the two females appeared to have achieved a measure of self-evaluation or self-differentiation which caused them to relinquish previous omnipotent or all-good self-representations. The girls expressed an acceptance of their own failings and increasing confidence in their personal ideas and beliefs, both indicators of an individuation process within themselves. This increased self-differentiation affected their interpersonal relationships, particularly with parents, as each girl experienced a varying degree of conflict with and separation from their parents at the beginning of mid-adolescence, then appeared to wish to return to closer adolescent-parent ties and to reduce conflicts in the relationship. The relational characteristics indicating a conflict between developing independence and re-establishing closeness with parents were indicative of the mid-adolescent girls' progression to a rapprochement phase in the separation-individuation process.

E. Late Adolescent Males

1. Adolescent-Parent Interactions

Shared Activities

The significance of shared activities to adolescent-parent relationships was scarcely discussed by the late adolescent males except for an indication from both boys that, as youngsters, they had spent a lot of time with their fathers engaged in recreational activities like fishing or in sports events. Both boys experienced marked limitations in the amount of time currently spent with their fathers, but seemed to view those early mutual activities as providing the foundation for a more intimate, friendly relationship. Activities shared with their mothers were also severely curtailed from earlier years. Incidental daily contacts like eating supper together, watching T.V., sharing household chores or casual conversation formed the basis for most interactions between parents and adolescents at

this stage. These circumstances resulted, in part, from a reduction in opportunities for shared activities due to the adolescents' increasing social, educational and employment commitments. One of the late adolescent males who attended University and resided in a nearby city during the school year, was in contact with his parents only on some weekends or during summer holidays. However, in contrast to the mid-adolescents, the late adolescent males demonstrated a more active decision to disengage from shared activities with their parents, regardless of the frequency of their contacts.

Both the adolescents and parents in this subgroup seemed to feel a sense that mutual or symmetrical activities were no longer required as an integral part of the relationship. As one father put it,

> By the time they're age 12 or 13 or 14 you've done all the forming you're going to do and there's really nothing else you can do about it except make sure they don't burn the house down or rob the bank. You know, you've got to keep the law and order in place but really you don't go around butting your head against the wall trying to change them because you're not that much of an influence any more. It's their friends. You've done your job.

For the late adolescent males then, a separation process did seem to be occurring at least in terms of reduced activities shared with parents in preference for peers. A mutual consensus also seemed to exist, however, that the underlying purpose of transmitting values, fostering skill development and facilitating intimacy and understanding between adolescents and parents had generally been attained by this stage. Thus the reduction in shared activities can be seen as a measure of an individuation process through which the adolescent's internalization of parental models and messages liberated both adolescents and parents from their earlier symbiotic modes of interaction.

Verbal Communication

Differences were observed in the late adolescent males' verbal communications with their mothers versus fathers. Although both boys experienced more opportunities for casual, general conversations and discussions of day to day concerns with their mothers, they demonstrated increased separation from mother-son intimacy by withholding some information or avoiding certain topics of conversation. For example, both late adolescent

males expressed a reluctance to discuss intimate or extensive details of their personal lives with their mothers. Their reasons for this reluctance differed, however. Paul P. (aged 18 years) appeared uncomfortable or embarrassed about discussing private concerns with his mother, and voiced doubts that she would be able to understand his perspective:

> I can talk to her (but) I can't talk to her about boyfriend/girlfriend type of things, like 'cause she's, like not one of the guys, but, I mean, she won't understand. She thinks she does, but I don't think she does, like understand exactly. She might understand, you know, in general, but she's not a guy with, you know, all those stereotyped rules and stuff like this, and she still thinks sometimes that I'm back in where she was going to school and, you know, things have changed a lot, like the drugs and the alcohol and stuff like that.

For Paul, the view that his mother lacked insight into or understanding of current issues or concerns faced by youths - particularly male youths - today, inhibited his self-disclosure and communication with his mother and led to increased reliance on his father for information and support.

The second late adolescent male (James J. aged 19 years) indicated that he curtailed his personal disclosures to his mother if he perceived her questions as intrusive. This generally occurred following a period of separation:

> Sometimes when I go home (after several months away) it almost seems like they want to hear, especially my mom, she really wants to hear about what I'm doing ... and I'll answer her questions to a point but I almost sometimes feel like she's intruding on my other life ... When it seems like she forces a question on me that's when maybe I turn off and I don't answer it completely or anything.

For James, the reluctance to reveal more about himself stemmed not so much from fear of embarrassment or being misunderstood, but as a resistance to anticipated pressures or interference from his parents:

> I'd like to feel I'm a little bit more independent. That it's my life and if - maybe I feel that if I told them what I'm doing, they would, oh, they might try and influence what I'm doing. And I sort of feel like I've been nurtured and looked after really well so long, and sometimes that's not so good. Sometimes you have to learn things for yourself, like experience.

The two boys' comments regarding their verbal communications offered some insight into the stage of the separation-individuation process at which they began to experience increased distancing or separation from their mothers. Paul's perception of his mother's limited ability to comprehend his experiences and perspective initiated

interactional changes during the differentiation phase of the process. James began to withold some information about himself from his mother in order to experience greater independence or autonomy as he explored and mastered his environment during the practising phase of separation-individuation.

With respect to their fathers, the two late adolescent males expressed the view that the father-son closeness which had been fostered by shared activities during early adolescence was maintained or enhanced by verbal communications at this later age. Rather than indicating a need to distance themselves from paternal intimacy as they had with their mothers, both boys expressed a desire to interact and communicate more as friends and equals with their fathers.

Paul expressed a desire for increased intimacy and personal disclosure between him and his father, noting,

> Well, my dad and I really became, I don't know, close, but we spent a lot of time through (sports), with him coaching me, and even when he wasn't coaching me, he was a fan and he'd really, we spent the most times talking about (sports). Nothing too personal, like, you know, what I was really feeling ... At the early age, like, five years ago, it didn't bother me that much. Now that I'm getting older, it's starting, you know, it's getting a little better, like, we're talking more as friends and, but I wish we could do more, cause he's, I think he's afraid to show his emotions, and I am as well, to show mine. And we really don't sit down and have, you know, the father/son talks. Lately, we've been having a couple of real doozies, that's for sure. And I wish we could be closer, I really do. I think, well, with work, he's been really busy ... and we really don't get that much time to see each other. And that's probably why we aren't as close as I'd like us to be.

Paul identified a sense of having gone through at least three distinct stages in his relationship with his father, starting from that "early age," up to 13 years, in which he and his father interacted more frequently as coach and player. During that stage Paul saw his father as being a "perfectionist" who demanded twice as much from his son as from the other players. This became a source of resentment for Paul "'cause, in a way, I didn't want preference, but deep down I thought he'd have preference for me, 'cause I was his son, and that really bothered me for a long time.'" Paul's progression through a differentiation process with respect to his father was evident in his disillusionment at realizing that his father was not the perfect, omnipotent parent that he had wanted and

expected him to be.

During the second stage, from about 13 to 17 years, Paul's communications with his father lapsed considerably. He saw this as a consequence of his own moodiness and unpredictability during those years, and his self-description depicted his progression through the practising phase of individuation to a beginning rapprochement process:

> There was a lot of things going through my mind then (i.e., decisions re: further education, competitive sports, school exams) and that's when I probably became the most erratic emotionally. I could be bouncing off walls and then the next minute I'd be just, you know, have nothing to say. It's really hard to, you know, understand what I'd be thinking and what I'd be thinking next.

The consequences of those erratic years continued to exert an influence on the father-son interactions, in spite of Paul's greater affective levelling in the past year.

> If my dad wanted to talk to me he wouldn't know, you know, what state of mind I'd be in – if I'd want to talk about it ... and my dad, he's fairly much the same. We don't know, you know, if he's in the mood to talk about it, so it's really hard to approach each other.

The transition to a third stage in their interactions occurred in the past year with Paul's desire for guidance, particularly regarding sexual concerns. The immediacy of the issue and lack of other acceptable confidants forced Paul to overcome his discomfort: "I came out and just said it bluntly, you know, so its seems like he almost had no way of side-stepping the issue if he wanted to." Paul was both surprised and gratified by his father's empathy and understanding. Mr. P.'s disclosure of his own similar experiences as a youth helped to initiate a further transition in the relationship between him and his son. The effect that this revelation had on Paul is apparent in his comments:

> (My dad) has told me some things from his past that I never thought that he felt. Emotions, like, O.K., I thought he felt them, but not to the same degree that I felt. Like, I thought I was totally different than him, I was expressing totally different emotions. But when he told me this thing, it caught me off guard at first, 'cause I thought "Oh my God! My dad had, you know, some of the same kind of experiences that I had." And when he told me that, it was, like, he was a father, but at that time he was more of a friend that I could, you know, counsel with and ... that really helped a lot.

Paul's experiences with his father clearly reflected a transition from the relational structure of unilateral authority at early adolescence, through differentiation and practising stages to the attainment of increased symmetrical reciprocity in late adolescence

and a renewed desire to restore harmony and be understood and supported by his father, which indicated a rapprochement process.

James was also conscious of a transition in his parent-son communications over the years, but described his desire for greater intimacy and equality with his father more in terms of interpersonal influence and decision-making capacity than intimate communication:

> As a young kid your parents have to make all your decisions for you 'cause you don't know enough about the world, but as you get older it's sort of an' adjustment on your part to not have them making decisions and it's an adjustment on their part to allow you to make your own decisions.

For James, the transition seemed not yet complete, in that even though his father encouraged him to make his own decisions or asked for his input on family decisions, his dad's underlying authoritarian role remained intact. This became most evident when James began voicing disagreement with his father's disciplinary tactics with siblings in the family. James' comments illustrate the reactions:

> Sometimes I voiced my disagreement or whatever and he sort of expressed that he'd rather that I keep my opinions to myself ... It's sort of I get to say what I think when my dad says I can basically ... The problem is that I don't have control over the conversations and if I'm asked a question I have to answer but if I ask a question it doesn't have to be answered back.

James felt that he had developed and changed his interactions over the years due to ideas and influences gained from post-secondary education, but that his father was not prepared to modify or assess his own attitudes and behaviors. Their ensuing difficulties underline the need for mutual and reciprocal adaptations in the adolescent-parent relationship. Prior to their confrontations regarding discipline and authority in the family, James had expressed positive expectations for change in the relationship:

> I think that someday my parents might look to me for advice as much as I look to them because right now I think that, especially with my dad, that sometimes he'll ask my opinion on things.

During a later interview, after James had become more vocal about his own views, however, he began to feel that he would need to move outside of that relationship in order to continue growing and experimenting with his own decisions.

> It's almost like there can only be one head of the household and only one person

> making decisions ... As I've grown older maybe I'm threatening to the dominance in the household. I don't know. So I guess maybe it's the signal that I'm going to have to be moving out someday.

For James, as for Paul, his involvement in a rapprochement process was apparent from the conflicting desires to maintain a close relationship with his father and to attain increased autonomy and independence. However, whereas Paul and his father had apparently resolved some of this conflict through a restructuring of their relationship to include more symmetrical interactions, James' father appeared reluctant to soften his role of unilateral authority toward his son. As a result, James perceived the necessity to move outside of the relationship, or physically separate from his father, in order to attain an individuated status. In this particular relationship it appeared that, while the son may have been prepared for a transition to symmetrical reciprocity, the father may have been experiencing greater difficulty resolving his rapprochement feelings and restructuring his attachments.

For the two late adolescent males and their parents, then, changes in their verbal communications reflected their developmental progression through various stages of a separation-individuation process. As in earlier subgroups, however, separation between adolescents and parents did not occur consistently at one point during this process, nor did it occur to the same extent for each adolescent-parent combination.

Conflict

The topics of disagreement or discord between late adolescent males and their parents were generally similar to those for all other subgroups and involved minor irritations over household chores, untidyness, school work and sibling interactions. As well, the participants in this subgroup expressed general agreement and value-congruence on most important issues like morals, religion, world views, or interpersonal attitudes, and generally saw their parents as desireable role models.

One area of significant conflict for the late adolescent boys, however, was experienced as a result of their parents' inability or unwillingness to restructure their interactions or change their role in the relationship. James experienced this difficulty

primarily in relation to his father, as discussed in the previous section. In Paul's family it was his mother who had not significantly altered her own role in their relationship. Her provision of nurturing, caretaking functions subverted Paul's increasing desire for independence and autonomy, causing him some internal conflict and feelings of frustration toward his mother. According to Paul,

> My mom really has babied me a lot.... She's basically been the homebody and really looked after us. When I was little and even now. But she does way too much more work than she should.

Paul's sense of discomfort and guilt at allowing his mother to maintain this role reflected his own expectations for greater changes in himself and their relationship. He had made some personal adjustments toward his desired self-image by attaining more financial independence via a part-time job and accepting greater responsibility for his own school work. Yet his mother continued to provide meals, do his laundry and clean for him, without reinforcing any expectations that he become more self-sufficient. Paul disliked his own inertia yet enjoyed the service sufficiently that he made no move to step out of the dependence on his own. He seemed to want or need his mother to foster or sanction that change. The following interchange illustrated Paul's dilemma:

> Interviewer: When you say that she's always going to think of you as her little boy, how do you feel about that?
> Paul: It's nice but I'd like her to realize that I'm getting older and slowly growing away. Like, I'm not growing away, I'm becoming dependent on myself, not as much on her. I'm slowly becoming self-dependent.
> Interviewer: If she would realize that, how would things be different?
> Paul: Maybe she would give me more room to grow that way. Like instead of making a lunch for me at school, if she says, "Well, wake up 15 minutes earlier and make your own lunch." ... or show me how to do my laundry, I'd do that for myself, stuff like that.
> Interviewer: So you would really like that push from her to be independent?
> Paul: Yeah, I don't really want to ask her 'cause she's my meal ticket. If she does it, I don't have to. But just, say, of respect, you know, it wouldn't be that bad, 'cause I'd feel a little better about myself if I did do that.

For both Paul and James, then, there appeared to be a need for a restructured adolescent-parent relationship to include more symmetrical reciprocity in their interactions. When this interactional restructuring was not encouraged or fostered by the parent, the adolescent began to experience increased intrapersonal or interpersonal conflicts and a potential need for increased separation or distancing from that parent in

order to continue the individuation process.

2. Parental Influences

Parenting Style

As noted in Tables 1 and 2 (pp. 72 and 73) parents of late adolescents in this study were more likely to use verbal punishments and rewards than any other strategy to influence their adolescents' behaviors. The mothers were somewhat more likely to punish with threats which were not carried out and to reward with general affection (being nicer or giving assistance) than were fathers. Fathers, on the other hand, were more likely to administer material rewards like gifts or treats than the mothers were.

The late adolescents boys observed that their mothers' attempts to discipline them with threats or admonishments held limited effectiveness. According to Paul his mother "tries to be strict," but "I kind of shrug her off when she tries to do that. I just yeah, yeah, in a second, or something like that." Paul indicated that he would prefer a more rational, persuasive approach from his mother, although he could not actually state that this approach would be more effective at obtaining his cooperation:

> I always felt really good towards her, but some days she gets me mad, like she always constantly badgers me ... tries to use the straight approach ... and that doesn't work at all. And if she'd talk to us a little more that way, I don't know if it would work, but she hasn't tried it much.... Like, instead of saying "Do your homework now!" if she said "Don't you think you'd better start doing your homework now or else you might regret it later," type thing.

For Paul, the use of authoritarian disciplinary tactics acted as a source of conflict in his relationship with his mother. For both Paul and James, their mothers' influence as authoritarian parents appeared to have been diminished or relinquished by this stage due to the son's resistance (both active and passive) to their control. The boys were much less likely, however, to challenge their father's authority, due at least in part to a fear of their father's physical retaliation.

> In a way I'm scared of my dad. Like I don't dare do half the stuff in front of him that I do in front of mom and so, you know, she'd be like a sounding board if I was mad. I'd, you know, get grumpy at her.

Both of the late adolescent males were extremely conscious of their father's greater physical prowess and viewed their acceptance of the fathers' authoritarian discipline as directly related to the dads' ability to force them into cooperation. Yet both boys also noted that their fathers rarely, if ever, used physical punishment with them. As James put it, "It was just the knowledge that he could punish me physically if he wanted to and that was enough usually."

In spite of their capitulation to paternal authority, however, the late adolescent males, more than any previous subgroup, indicated a strong desire and expectation for authoritative parenting techniques and mutual input into the decision making process. The attainment of such symmetrical reciprocity in their relationships served to enhance the process of individuation-in-connection between parents and adolescents. However, when the parent appeared unable or unwilling to relinquish an authoritarian parenting style, the adolescent-parent relationship experienced increased conflict and a heightened separation process as noted in the *conflicts* section.

Parental Expectations

Parents and adolescents in this subgroup described a parental focus on process expectations as opposed to outcome expectations. Parents expected their sons to try their best, work to their abilities, enjoy life, and be happy or satisfied with what they did. The absence of specific outcomes or goals dictated by parents, and parents' expressions of overall satisfaction with their adolescents' achievements indicated a general departure from the relational structure of unilateral authority. Late adolescent males were given considerable input into choosing their own goals and lifestyles, although parents remained accessible for guidance or support.

All of the parents of late adolescent males also expressed a conviction that their sons would be successful in attaining a mature "grown-up" status and would enter into marital partnerships. Neither of the two late adolescent boys considered themselves "grown-up" at the time of their interviews, but their parents felt that they were getting very close. Paul's father, in fact, thought that his son had attained full maturity. Paul's

mother noted that he was "getting pretty close" to being grown-up.

James' parents also felt that their son was approaching maturity. His father rated James as "more than 50% grown up" but observed that his son still needed to gain more control over his own life, and to show more respect for other's property. James' father anticipated that his son would require another two to three years to mature fully. He also indicated that James would likely have to live away from the parental home for several years in order to attain a more symmetrical relationship with his father. Mr. J. based these expectations on his experiences with his own father and it appears possible that his expectations served as a form of self-fulfilling prophesy. As noted previously, James also expressed the view that he would need to move out of home or separate from his father in order to achieve greater autonomy, but wished that their relationship might have been restructured in-connection instead. During his third interview James was asked whether he was still satisfied overall with his relationship with his father. He replied,

> James: I'm satisfied. The only thing is that I'm kind of sad that - okay, the way, the kind of punishment now my dad has decided on. He said that if I don't agree with the way he does things and I want to make decisions for my own self, then I better do them in my own house or whatever, sort of thing. Like, when I'm here, I stick with his rule. And I'm kind of sad that he had to voice it. I mean that he had to say it like that. But I guess that's the only way. I guess every parent usually has to come to that point when he has got - when they've got someone growing up and close to moving out anyway, I guess.
> Interviewer: How would you like it to be? How do you wish that it were rather than him giving you an ultimatum like that?
> James: Well I wish that - at least I like it when we can sit down and discuss things and I can voice my opinion, and then if he thinks it is wrong then he can explain to me why he thinks it is wrong or, you know, so I can understand why he does things the way he does. But instead sometimes I don't get a chance to voice my opinion at all, I guess. So it's sort of I get to say what I think when my dad says I can basically.

Mr. J. and his son both viewed James' eventual departure from the parental home as a significant milestone in the development of greater equality or symmetrical reciprocity in their relationship. The other parents in the late adolescent subgroup similarly perceived their sons' departures as natural developmental occurences and did not anticipate severe negative consequences to themselves or their interrelationships following this separation. The boys' involvement in university and the gradual separation made possible through their university attendance was identified as an important factor in

limiting parental concerns regarding separation.

3. Adolescent Influences

Peer Relationships

Both of the late adolescent males experienced good peer relationships overall, maintaining a few close friends over long periods of time and forming numerous casual alliances easily at various times or for specific activities like sports. The parents of both boys indicated that their sons had undergone a transition in peer relationships during early high school or from age fifteen. At about this age both boys became more involved in heterosexual social activities like parties. Shortly thereafter, however, they became critical of the prevalence of drugs and alcohol at these functions and both boys subsequently withdrew from their peer group and became much more selective in their choice of friends. One parent described the change in the following observations:

> He makes new friends all the time, but he picks out the best of what there is, you know. Okay, you know, let's do a little bit of history. When he became a teenager, he became aware of girls. He became very popular and got invited to parties and he had all kinds of friends. And he saw the drinking and the dope and that and he just changed. All of a sudden he didn't go to parties, he didn't go around with his friends and I said to my wife, "what's going on here?" She said, "he recognized them for what they were and he decided to deal himself out of the game." So let's say, maybe now - maybe that was grade 9 or 10.... He sort of said, this scene is not for me and he got out of it and he made another group of friends and he has - still has friends, but he treats them - you know those friends from his party group, still has a lot of them, but he stays away from them. So I think he did a good job there and cultivated a whole new set of friends. Through various sports, and they're female and male. He's got as many friends, female, that are just friends, they're not girlfriends, you know what I mean.

The two late adolescent males thus both appeared to have experienced a period of increased peer group activities at mid-adolescence, which, combined with an evaluation or differentiation of peer characteristics and behaviors, led to their own withdrawal or rejection of influences from a segment of their social group. This process closely resembled the individuation with respect to peers which was described by members of both mid-adolescent subgroups, indicating that, for these participants, the period of mid-adolescence represented a time when the adolescents began to become more aware and

critical of peers as individuals, and more selective in applying personal values to the selection of friends. As well, mid- to late adolescence appeared to be the time when platonic heterosexual intimacy began to be accepted by the two late adolescent males. Both boys indicated a preference for sharing certain concerns, like social or friendship problems, with peers rather than parents, yet still indicated that one or both parents remained the preferred confidant for their most serious or intimate concerns.

Cognitive Development

Both of the late adolescent males demonstrated an ability to assess and review the interactions between themselves and their parents, identifying changes in the nature of the relationship over the years, and projecting their experiences into future expectations. Their ability to take the perspective of another person and to recognize the inherent similarities and continuities between their own experiences and those of their parents appeared to be increasing, sometimes rather dramatically, as with Paul's sudden and surprised insight that his dad had the same feelings as he did. The late adolescents' realization that they were not unique in their experiences or emotions represented a marked development from the predominantly egocentric perspective of the younger adolescents. Their acknowledgement of more complex, universal human characteristics in their parents also served to remove the capital "P" parent as authority role. The adolescents became more cognizant of individual human failings and mutability of parents' decisions. As well, the late adolescent males demonstrated an awareness and differentiation of themselves as individuals with human failings and virtues. Both of the boys obtained a "moratorium" identity status (Marcia, 1965) which reflected their cognitive struggle with ideological issues and life-style decisions that had not yet been resolved. Overall, the late adolescent males had clearly attained formal operational thought processes and a differentiated perspective of parents, peers and self.

Both late adolescent males indicated that they were still strongly influenced by parental advice and guidance (especially their fathers'), but they were very cognizant of their ability to independently evaluate and choose to accept or reject parental input. It

appeared that the boys' efforts to express their dissension or act upon their feelings of greater equality, however, required that the parents be prepared to concomittantly relinquish the somewhat idealized and certainly more powerful roles which they previously held. If this parental adjustment was not forthcoming, the adolescents' growth within the relationship appeared to falter. A process of adolescent-parent separation seemed to be initiated in these relationships in order to enable the adolescent to achieve his desired autonomy and continue the individuation process when adolescent-parent interrelationship developments were non-synchronous.

4. Inter-Relationship Transitions

Transitions in the male late adolescents' relationships with their parents were described in considerable detail in the preceeding sections, particularly under *verbal communication* and *conflict*. Adolescents, mothers and fathers were all conscious of changes in the adolescent himself, including greater independence and acceptance of personal responsibilities, as well as increased interpersonal communication and sensitivity to others. The extent to which the adolescent's maturation initiated transitions in the adolescent-parent relationship, however appeared to be moderated by parental influences. Both late adolescent boys indicated that they experienced reductions in interpersonal closeness in their relationship with a parent who was less receptive or responsive to the son's maturational development. Such relationships demonstrated a separation-individuation process in which the adolescent and parent experienced increased conflicts and a withdrawal or reduced sense of verbal sharing and intimacy. An example of this process was provided by James in the following transcript, in which he discussed his own transition from an undifferentiated perspective of his father as omnipotent and omniscient, to a more differentiatied view and a "testing" process to establish his own sense of power or autonomy in their relationship.

> Interviewer: Has the change in the relationship between you and your father since you've been back home (from university), has it affected the way you feel about your dad? The way you feel for him?
> James: No – it's hard to say. I guess that when I was younger I really thought my dad was God and really looked up to him, and I always thought that he was right, but now I know that he is not always right. So that, I guess, that's how it has

changed.
Interviewer: And coming with that, do you have less respect for him now than you did?
James: Well it's hard to say. I don't know if you could call it respect when I was younger, because I couldn't – I guess I didn't really have a reasoning ability. But I still respect him. Maybe sometimes I guess I do feel disrespectful, but on the whole I still respect my dad for his opinions, even if they aren't always right.
Interviewer: Do you care for him less now?
James: No, I don't think so. I think I'll always – I'll always love him, even if we don't always agree on things either. If something big comes up where we don't agree, like, I'll still always love him.
Interviewer: Do you think your dad tends to overreact to your disagreement?
James: Yeah, sometimes. It's just, it's just the personality he is. He can heat up pretty fast but I don't – like he has never ever hit us or anything. It is just that the shouting or anger that I see makes me feel bad, so I try, I try not to bring up things if I can avoid it. As long as I can get along with his decision.
Interviewer: If someone else were to disagree with him in the same way that you are, do you think he would take it differently or the same as he does with your disagreement?
James: Yeah, it would be different, because it would probably be someone close to his own age, his own experience, and probably in his own field and one of his peers, so it probably would be handled differently. And he might feel the same anger and everything, but I think, I think in that case that he would probably be forced to control, control his opinion or anger or whatever.
Interviewer: He would feel a little bit more open about it or at least polite about it with the other person.
James: Oh yeah, he'd be more polite, I guess.[2]
Interviewer: Is there anything else, James, that you can add at this point regarding your relationship with your dad?
James: No. I guess sometimes, though, that I almost feel like I'm going out of my way to argue with him. I guess in some cases, just I guess sometimes, I'm kind of spiteful. I want to argue with him. And sometimes I think maybe I do go out of my way to bring in the conflict sometimes.
Interviewer: Why would you do a thing like that?
James: I don't know. I guess to try and – I think it might be to try and test how far I can go. I mean how much of a leeway I have in a conversation or whatever. I think that's probably the main reason. I think maybe it's sort of a constant testing to see where our relationship is.
Interviewer: What are you looking for when you are testing this relationship?
James: I'm hoping that my opinion will have greater influence I guess. I think that's probably the main reason. I wonder why sometimes. I wonder why sometimes I do that.
Interviewer: How do you feel after the conflict, after you have succeeded in stirring it up?
James: I guess sometimes – I guess sometimes it is satisfying to know or to let my dad know that somebody disagrees with him. It is just that I don't want to push it too far and make him angry, that is all. It is hard to put it into words. I guess sometimes I wish I had never said anything. Like, I don't want to bring any extra problems. It depends what kind of mood I'm in, but I usually try not to bring in any major extra problems...

James sought his father's validation of his own growing sense of autonomy and individuality,

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[2]James subsequently discussed his father's likely response to disagreements with various other individuals. This section was omitted here as it added little to what had already been said.

seemingly using the parental response as a kind of guage of his personal maturity. James' dissatisfaction with the response obtained was evident in his repeated re-testing, in hopes that his father would eventually accord him a more-equal, adult status.

According to James' comments Mr. J.'s reluctance to acknowledge and accommodate his son's desire for relational restructuring from unilateral authority to increased symmetrical reciprocity eventually resulted in greater psychological separation between the two. James continued to cooperate within the relational form of complementary reciprocity to the extent that he withheld his opinions or comments if he felt they might initiate major disagreements. At the same time, however, he obtained considerable gratification from emphasizing the independence of his personal convictions and attitudes from those of his father.

James experienced a more mutual, interactive restructuring of his relationship with his mother. He observed,

> I think if I ever wanted sympathy, that if I ever felt that I was unjustly done by, I think I'd tell my mom about it. That was before, when I was younger, but I think things have changed. For one thing, I can usually see that there is a reason behind bad things happening to me and its a cause and effect relationship, and it's a lot of my own doing that bad things happen to me. And as a result, also, I think she (mom) sees or she's less supportive in that way, because she wants me to see that aspect of it. She wants me to see that part of it is my own fault when bad things happen now.

James' comments reflect his transition through a practising phase of adolescent individuation. He has accepted responsibility for his own actions and their consequences, and no longer needs to return to the secure home base of unconditional maternal support and protection. James' desire for increasing independence and autonomy was not only accepted and acknowledged by his mother – she actively encouraged and fostered her son's maturation by restructuring her own relational interactions with him. Although there were times when Mrs. J. reverted to a more unilateral authority role (as with occasionally intrusive questioning) and James consequently withdrew from her, the relationship between James and his mother generally indicated more of an individuation-in-connection process than did the relationship with his father.

Paul's relationship with his mother, in contrast to James', did not undergo a similar interrelational restructuring. Paul perceived his mother as having maintained an overly

nurturing, caretaking role towards her son, as described under *verbal communication*. In spite of Paul's desire to move beyond the secure home-base of their relationship, he experienced difficulties achieving increased independence due to the absence of the provision of greater impetus for change by his mother.

The transitions observed in the two late adolescent boys' relationships with their parents demonstrated the boys' progression through differentiation and practising phases of an adolescent individuation process. A restructuring of the relationship from one of unilateral parental authority to increasing symmetrical reciprocity appeared necessary in order for this subgroup to maintain an individuation-in-connection process. Even with the observed increases in adolescent independence and autonomy during this stage, the importance of the parental role and influence was apparent. The adolescents' need for parental endorsement and even initiation of increased adolescent independence reinforces the view that the adolescent is not a lone reflective organizer of reality. Transitions in adolescent-parent relationships in this subgroup support a view of adolescent development and individuation involving an interactive, co-constructed process throughout the teen years and beyond.

Summary

A central issue in the adolescent-parent relationships for this subgroup was the boys' desire for increased symmetrical reciprocity in their interactions with parents, particularly with respect to a mutual, shared decision-making process. Interrelational transitions throughout the teen years were described by both boys as well as their parents. The various stages described in the adolescent-parent relationships (especially between father and son), clearly demonstrated some characteristics of a separation-individuation process similar to that described by Mahler (1968).

The initial phase, or symbiosis, was experienced during pre- and early adolescence with a relational structure of unilateral authority. The parents generally assumed responsibility for decision-making and their sons accepted this ultimate authority, with one boy even describing his father as seeming "like God" in those days. The adolescents' transition to a

differentiation phase was apparent in their expressed disillusionment at recognizing parental weaknesses or imperfections, and their criticism of parental behaviors like disciplinary tactics.

During the period of about mid-adolescence both boys had progressed to a practising phase of individuation, as evidenced by their increased involvement in and concern about school, work, sports, future decisions and peer activities. The two boys began expressing their opinions and the disagreement with parents more vocally and demonstrated some increases in emotional lability. As well, the boys increased their differentiation with respect to peers, evaluating friends more critically and becoming more selective with respect to peer relationships. Heterosexual friendships were formed and parents or peers began to be distinguished as preferred confidants for certain topics of conversation.

The two late adolescent males' subsequent desire for increased harmony and intimacy, particularly with respect to their fathers, combined with their wish for greater autonomy and authority in their own lives, reflected the conflicting drives of the rapprochement phase. Two parents also appeared to experience a rapprochement process with respect to their adolescents' increasing individuation, however. One boy's father appeared reluctant to relinquish his authoritarian controls within the relationship, while the second boy's mother experienced difficulty in relaxing her caretaking, nurturing protection of her son. In these two relationships, the impediment to restructuring adolescent-parent interactions appeared to result in an intensified separation process between parent and son. Alternately, when the parents were perceived as accepting and encouraging their sons' increasing independence, the interrelationships appeared to undergo restructuring to incorporate increased symmetrical reciprocity, and the adolescent demonstrated an individuation-in-connection process.

F. Late Adolescent Females

1. Adolescent-Parent Interactions

Shared Activities

As with their male counterparts, the late adolescent females and their parents reported a definite trend to disengagement from mutual activities compared to earlier years. Activities which were shared were largely symmetrical in form, that is they involved equal participation of both parent and daughter. The girls and their mothers primarily shared shopping trips, watching television or attending family festivities like showers. Fathers and daughters were primarily involved in recreational pursuits like going for walks, camping trips or sports activities.

Neither adolescents nor parents in this subgroup appeared to view the reduction in shared activities as an indicator or cause of less intimacy in their relationships. One late-adolescent female (Ellen, 18 years) described sharing similar interests with her mother and stated, "I spend more time with my mom ... (but) I do get along with my dad more than I do with my mom." Shared activities thus appeared to hold only minor significance in the quality of adolescent-parent relationships for this subgroup.

Once again, there was a sense that shared activities had served a purpose earlier in the relationship but were no longer needed to the same extent. Parents, as well as adolescents seemed to expect and sanction this change as illustrated in the following comments by one father of a late adolescent female:

> Interviewer: You've mentioned several activities that you and Nancy shared, including holidays, fishing, playing catch, watching sports. What kinds of activities do you share now?
> Mr. N.: Now? Well, I don't know really. Well, we work in the garden together, you know, all of us work. We'll cut grass or we sit out in the veranda, patio there and we talk and that's about it. I know she's practically got her own things to do now. She had a boyfriend, so they would be doing their own thing, so she wouldn't have too much time with us.
> Interviewer: She's not spending as much time around home?
> Mr. N.. No, she's got her own friends. Which I expect of her, you know, she should. There's no reason why she should spend time, that much time with us, I mean. She's, you know, she should do whatever she wants to do.

Mr. N.'s daughter, Nancy (18 years) agreed with her parents' assessment of her level of independence and physical disengagement from shared activities but she described her parents' perceptions of this development quite differently than her father had. From Nancy's point of view, her parents still wanted her to share more activities with them, the way that she used to. She added,

> But there's no way in the world I could spend – there'd have to be 40 hours in a day for me to spend as much time as I did with them. And they find that hard to get used to. Really hard. Like, they say my time is consumed with school and friends and sports, and when you're my age, what more can there be?

The alternating push for independence and greater peer involvement and the conflicting pull to retain parental attachment and intimacy that is implied by these comments recalls the characteristics of Mahler's rapprochement stage in infants. Whether this process of rapprochement is primarily felt by the adolescent, parent or both in this relationship becomes more clear from an investigation of the features of verbal communication and parent-daughter conflicts for the late adolescent females.

Verbal Communication

The late adolescent females and their parents described limited verbal communications in their interrelationships. Both girls indicated that they usually did not discuss personal concerns, including friendships, dating relationships or life problems with their parents. Selected instrumental concerns were shared with parents, however. The girls generally discussed mechanical problems with vehicles and questions about school work with their fathers, who were seen as more qualified to assist in these fields. Mothers were consulted in domestic areas like sewing or cooking. Parental assistance and advice was generally appreciated and utilized when it was requested, but both girls resisted and resented their parents' input when they perceived it as intrusive or critical. Each late adolescent female generally preferred to utilize a best friend or an older sibling for disclosure of present-centered personal concerns, but did discuss future plans and goals with her parents. Three of the four parents in this subgroup appeared to be quite authoritarian and directive in their verbal interactions, even when their intent was to

provide non-directive support and encouragement. Their comments reflected this attitude:

> "I tell her how it should be done and I say you use your own method.";
> "(I tell her) just to try, even if you can't (do it), just to try anything, you know.";
> "I've gone through all that and I'm much more knowledgeable on it than she is and I figure I should be able to tell her what's right. I'll tell her what I think is right and then she could distinguish what she wanted to do from there."

The fourth parent described a less directive approach in guiding his daughter. His comments indicated a confidence in his daughter's own judgement based on her internalization of parental values and attitudes. When asked what kind of help or advice he usually gave to his daughter this father replied:

> Mr. E.: She doesn't want advice, she doesn't want advice. So we pretty well have to feel her out and see how she thinks and how she handles the situation herself.
> Interviewer: So you don't really directly help her or give her some advice or suggest what she should do, or anything like that?
> Mr. E.: No.
> Interviewer: In a way, you don't really influence her decisions? Or do you?
> Mr. E.: I think her mind is so open that she sees – perhaps she might follow our steps, right, and she probably tells herself, "Well, mom and dad, I think they would do it this way, and that's the right way." And I think the communication we have is in our mind, heart, whatever, and she seems to think the same way as we do.

Mr. E.'s daugher, Ellen, agreed with her father's assessment of their interactions and expressed a preference for his non-directive and non-intrusive interactions.

> He doesn't really talk about my personal life, so I think that's all right. I mean, I know he wants to know, like, he seems sometimes sad and wants to know what's going on, but he won't say or ask if I want to tell him. I will, but he won't ask, so I don't say. I'm more quiet with my father, so I think it's easier for me to get along with him than my mother ... she just wants to know everything.

With respect to her mother, Ellen indicated that, although their relationship was generally a good one, her mother's tendency to question her about and attempt to advise her regarding private concerns was unwelcome and ineffective:

> She wants to know everything about my life and she wants me to open up. Like, I had a boyfriend and it was kind of hard for me to describe what was going on with my boyfriend because she was always, you know, trying to give her advice and I didn't really like it.

Ellen saw her own withdrawal from intimate conversations with her mother as a cause, rather than a consequence of this intrusiveness, however. Ellen stated, "I think when she

realized that I was spending more time with other people – I was not as much with her ... she wanted to get into my life too."

Nancy also noted her dissatisfaction with her parents' verbal interactions and said she preferred to utilize peers for most intimate self-disclosures. She noted that she would like to have a closer relationship with her mother, but that her mother's tendency to criticize, dominate her and "jump to conclusions" rendered that untenable. As a result, Nancy and her mother "really don't talk that much. I've never really confided in my mom or dad. It's usually my friends, or I handle it myself, if there wâs a problem."

Nancy described her relationship with her father somewhat more positively, largely because she felt that their interactions might ultimately be restructured to include greater equality and symmetrical reciprocity:

> Interviewer: How do you expect your relationship with your dad to be in the future?
> Nancy: I think my dad will change more than my mom will.
> Interviewer: How will you and he, your interactions change?
> Nancy: I probably will, if I get to a stage where I can confide to either parent, it will be to my dad.
> Interviewer: What kinds of things can you imagine yourself confiding?
> Nancy: ... I don't know about relationships with other people, but I could see talking more about certain things, like things I have to learn how to do, like stuff around, involved with financing, on my own, and I can see myself talking to my dad first before I would my mom. I always have this vision of, I'm older and I have kids and my parents are the ones who are going to come and visit *me* and I can see my dad as being the one that's totally going to spoil my kids. A lot. That'll be his prize. I think when I get older we'll have a better relationship.
> Interviewer: Somehow relating around your children and his grand children?
> Nancy: Yeah. And I can see my mom the opposite. She'd pick, say "No. You're doing that wrong. They're going to turn out rotten if you keep doing it like that." She's got the Self Discipline, Discipline. And my dad will be the "Oh, let her do it the way she wants to do it. She's grown up. She has her own mind." My mom won't be that way.
> Interviewer: For mom you will never grow up?
> Nancy: Yep.

For both late adolescent females, then, reductions in adolescent-parent communications appeared to reflect elements of the practising stage of separation-individuation. The girls' increased exploration of their social world via peer involvement, their resistance to parental controls, and their emphasis on ways in which they differed (especially from their mothers) all reflected characteristics of the practising process.

Conflict

The two families in this subgroup experienced adolescent-parent conflicts very differently, yet the major underlying difficulties in their relationships appeared quite similar. Ellen's family described a high level of intrafamilial agreement regarding important issues and values like capital punishment, marriage and abortion, but experienced some conflict or disagreement regarding interpersonal relationships, Ellen's tendency to withdraw, and minor issues like use of the telephone. All three family members frequently dealt with interpersonal conflict or disagreement by withdrawing or keeping their views to themselves.

In Nancy's family all members experienced frequent disagreement on most issues or values. Conflicts or arguments occurred over topics ranging from hairstyles, clothes, and sports to school, friendships and "the way we think." Nancy and her parents did concur, however, that they always expressed or showed their disagreement.

Nancy's family consequently experienced more frequent arguments or actual conflict than did Ellen's family. The underlying difficulty in both homes, however, involved the adolescent-parent struggles regarding relational restructuring. Both late adolescent females sought a change from the structure of unilateral parental authority to one of greater parental acceptance of the daughter's autonomy and independence. When these desires were frustrated, by excessive maternal questioning for Ellen, or by parental disagreement and criticism for Nancy, the daughters exerted their independence via separation – withdrawing from or rebelling against their parents. Once again, the girls' ongoing involvement in a practising process was apparent in their rejection of parental controls and emphasis of their separateness.

2. Parental Influences

Parental Expectations

The parents of late adolescent females consistently emphasized process goals rather than specific outcome expectations for their daughters. They wanted their

daughters to "get something she's totally happy with in life," "be open-minded and honest with herself," "respect her parents and elders" or "be happy and know where she's going." Both late adolescent girls acknowledged that the choice of actual goals or future directions rested with themselves, and all family members felt that the daughters were generally successful in meeting parental expectations.

The parents in this subgroup were also convinced that their daughters would achieve mature, adult status and they felt that, in most aspects, the girls were already grown-up. In contrast to the parents' views, however, Ellen felt that she was "still a kid" in some ways, and Nancy was convinced that her parents did not view her as a grown-up even though she had considered herself mature since the age of 16.

In combination, the parents' and daughters' comments suggested an apparent dichotomy in parental and adolescent perceptions of the girls' maturity level. The parents' overall satisfaction with their daughters' behavior and potential accomplishments also appeared to contradict the reports of interrelational arguments and conflicts described in the previous section by one late adolescent family. The seeming inconsistencies or contradictions in some parents' attitudes and behaviors may be a reflection of their difficulty in accepting changes in the adolescent-parent relationship. These parents ostensibly acknowledged their daughters' autonomy and mature capabilities yet they appeared reluctant to relinquish or reduce their involvement or authoritarian role within the relationship. This conflict between letting go and holding on to the parent-child relationship reflects Mahler's rapprochement process involving conflicting desires for attaining independence and autonomy versus retaining a close, interdependent relationship.

The existence of parental rapprochement feelings was further demonstrated in one mother's description of her anticipated response to her daughter's departure from home:

> Interviewer: How do you think you will feel and react when Ellen leaves home to live on her own?
> Mrs. E.: Scared.
> Interviewer: Scared of what?
> Mrs. E.: Even if she doesn't ask a lot of things from me, at least I'm here. If she moves away from home, I don't know, I think she'd ask even less, I think.

> Maybe I'm wrong. She's never been away from home, but maybe they start doing things on their own. They don't really need you anymore, you know, and you get sort of, I don't know. Mothers, they're always your babies, so it makes you feel as if you've really got to let go a bit. Well, you never have to let go totally, but you have to let go a bit and when they're on their own, they have to find their own way. That hurts.

This mother appeared to be afraid of losing her connection with her daughter after she moved away, and perhaps saw herself as concurrently losing some of her own identity as a caretaker and mother. The effect of her rapprochement feelings on her parenting style and the adolescent-mother relationship will be examined further in the following section.

Parenting Style

As described previously, several of the parents in this subgroup apparently had not reconciled themselves to their daughter's increasing autonomy and involvement in external commitments and relationships. These parents seemed to be trying to retain or return to a previous level of interaction which was no longer applicable. Their desire to arrest their daughters' increasing independence was also evident at times in the parents' attempts to maintain an authoritarian role in the relationship. As with the late adolescent males, parental attempts at authoritarian controls or discipline were evaluated negatively. Ellen's parents appeared to be less confrontational in their interactions and Ellen's use of avoidance or withdrawal tactics served to deter them. For Nancy, her parents' criticism and attempts to restrict her activities resulted in more active confrontation and disagreement. However, unlike their male counterparts, neither girls expressed any concern regarding the physical prowess of their parents, nor the possibility that parents might use this as an ultimate coercive tactic. As a result, Nancy appeared quite prepared to argue her own views with her parents and to act on these to the point of defying parental authority if necessary. As she put it,

> I'll express how I feel and they'll argue about it. They'll say, "No, no. It's wrong." and then in the end they'll let me do what I want. They'll say "If that's your decision, fine. Go ahead and do that if that's what you think it should be and it's right."

The parents in this case, while still attempting to maintain authoritarian controls, appeared ultimately resigned to the knowledge that their daughter would determine her own behaviors and decisions. They frequently disagreed with her choices and withheld their approval or support, but Nancy appeared sufficiently confident in her own views that she would act on them even in the face of parental disapproval.

In Ellen's adolescent-parent relationships, a more democratic, authoritative parenting style was evident. Mr. E. for example, described himself as "easy to comply with" because he generally allowed his daughter to "do her own thing," anticipating her cooperation with her mother's guidelines, but he was prepared to "straighten her out at times" if necessary. Ellen corroborated her father's description, adding "He'll always be open to suggestions, you know, to talk about things. He'll always be the same, I'm sure."

Ellen's mother also demonstrated some characteristics of authoritative parenting in her desire to act as a confidant and guide to her daughter. Ellen perceived her mother's interest and assistance as more authoritarian or intrusive, however. When asked how she would like her relationship with her mother to be different, for example, Ellen replied,

> I can't change the relationship between my mother and I – because it's just there. I don't know, she talks about cooking and cleaning and, you know, when I get married, I've got to learn how to. I don't have any interest in learning all this, I don't know. To be different. I'd like to change her wanting to know more about myself. I'd like to just keep myself, I'd like to keep everything that I know about myself in me. I don't want to tell everybody, because I'm afraid that she'll just tell everybody else. I don't want her to know. It's just my life, and other than that, I think we get along great and there's nothing really I'd like to change. I really, I'm glad that she's my mom.

According to all family members, Ellen had always been very quiet and private, even seclusive at times, with her family. According to Ellen, it was largely in the past two years that she and her mother had begun to experience increased conflict regarding her withdrawal and separation. Interestingly, this time frame coincided with the departure and marriage of an older sibling who had acted as a major confidant to both mother and daughter. It appears possible that Mrs. C. subsequently attempted to restructure her relationship with Ellen, to replicate the role of the elder sibling in both their lives. Ellen's resistance to her mother's increased involvement was noteably different from the response

of one mid-adolescent boy (Matthew) to his father's attempts at enhancing interrelational intimacy. Whereas the mid-adolescent responded willingly to the relational restructuring and establishment of a more symbiotic relationship, this late adolescent girl's involvement in a practising process appeared to preclude her interest in mother-daughter ties. Her mother's advances were not totally ineffectual, however, as Ellen remarked,

> Just recently, we started talking a little more because I broke up with my boyfriend, and she was really understanding and it really suprised me. I couldn't believe it.

Moreover, Ellen's advice for other teenagers on how to achieve a good relationship with their parents indicated her desire to continue becoming more intimate with her mother in the future:

> The relationship I have with my mom is just starting to get good, so I would say, be open, tell them what you feel all the time, 'cause they're interested in you, just as much as you are with them. So, I'd say be open. My life with my mom before, it was so hard for me to get along with her, so quiet and reserved, and now that I am starting to open up, I think it's getting better, so I would say open up. And I think that's about it.

Based on the observations of this late adolescent daughter-mother relationship, it appears that there may be periods within the adolescent individuation process during which the teenager will be more or less receptive to parents' attempts to increase interpersonal intimacy and restructure relational interactions to include more symmetrical reciprocity. Alternately (or concurrently) the adolescent-mother relationship may be more susceptible to a regressive pull toward symbiotic or undifferentiated enmeshment during rapprochement. The late adolescent girls' withdrawal or separation from their mothers could thus be seen as a reactive attempt to establish their independence and continue the individuation process. Whatever the underlying reason for the daughters' response to parental attempts to retain greater influence and involvement in their lives, this parenting style reflected a conflict between the parents' expressed desire to encourage their daughters' independence, and their attempts to retain the intimacy and influence of the symbiotic phase. These characteristics of parenting style supported the notion that parents, as well as adolescents, may experience the conflicting drives of a rapprochement

process as part of the adolescent-individuation process.

3. Adolescent Influences

Peer Relationships

The two late adolescent females accorded greater importance to intimate peer relationships than any other adolescent subgroup did. Of all the adolescents interviewed, Nancy was the only one to express an overall preference for using a close friend for self-disclosure of important concerns, and Ellen indicated that the person who had the most influence or effect on her life was probably her boyfriend.

The parents in this subgroup were also aware of the importance of intimate peer relationships in their daughters' lives. Both families described the girls as maintaining long-term, close friendships and confiding in peers about a wide variety of topics or concerns. Both girls experienced increased intimacy with peers and had formed a close heterosexual friendship by late adolescence. Nancy's parents described a very sudden transition in her peer relationships, and they observed a definite impact on the adolescent-parent relationship as a result. Nancy's mother commented,

> We did notice a big change once she got into junior high school. Because she was a lot, well, you know, they get into their friends bit, where their friends are all-important. I think she was probably about 13, 14. It was still happening when she was going to her last school and that was in grade 7, grade 8 and she sort of ignored what her parents - she kind of was cutting the ties a bit. O.K., for example, her dad sometimes didn't want here to cut her hair a certain way or - I don't know what it was, but there was something to do with the hair - and she came home and she had her hair done and she said that she was 13 years old and it was time that she could make up her own decisions and she didn't have to have her parents telling her what to do and how to do it.

Ellen also experienced some changes in her mother-daughter relationship as a result of her increased peer involvement. When asked if her relationship with her mother had always been the same Ellen replied,

> I think I just started realizing, like, her wanting to know more about me, it's like, as I grew older. Before there wasn't really much to know about me. I was a kid. I was just like any other child, but like I was saying before, I used to really like writing letters and I was always in my room and she wanted me to come out and to talk and, I don't know, it really didn't interest me too much so I, I don't know, I think when she realized that I was spending more time with other

> people, I was not as much with her, and writing letters and things, she wanted to get into my life too. And so as far as that goes, it's only been, it only started about two years ago, so up 'til now it's been like that, you know, not at any time before that.

Participants in the late adolescent female subgroup thus appeared to demonstrate a process of adolescent-parent separation, with increased involvement in peer relationships, such as that described by Blos (1979) and Erikson (1968). The adolescents' reports of intimate conversations and interdependence with peers similarly supported Youniss and Smollar's (1985) contention that inter-relational reciprocity was generally developed in adolescent-peer relationships prior to its appearance in adolescent-parent interactions. As noted in the results for previous subgroups, however, this sequence was not universally experienced by all participants in the current study. Nor is it feasible, based on the available data, to suggest that greater adolescent involvement in either parent or peer relationships is preferable or more effective in fostering the adolescent individuation process.

The results obtained from the late adolescent female's subgroup do, however, offer indications of interrelational factors which may increase the likelihood of a separation process between parents and adolescents. In Nancy's family it appeared that parental responses to her gradually increasing expressions of independence and autonomy were frequently critical and restricting or authoritarian. Nancy's reaction seemed to indicate an increasing separation process, with a rejection of parental controls and intimacy and the development of a structure of greater symmentrical reciprocity in peer relationships. Ellen's parents, on the other hand, expressed a desire for more reciprocal interactions with their daughter but were limited by Ellen's reluctance to establish a closer relationship. Ellen's withdrawal or separation from intimacy with her parents was only partly in response to her perception of their authoritarian controls. For Ellen, other self-initiated influences appeared also to be involved. These included her own personal history of quiet introspection and seclusion, her habitual reliance on an older sibling as a preferred confidant, and her current involvement in external commitments to friends and her job. Based on the present participants, the intensified peer relationships could be seen

as either a cause or an effect of the adolescent-parental separation processes. Transitions in the adolescent-parent relationship, moreover, appear to be co-constructed or determined by both parental and adolescent influences.

It should be noted, also, that although both late adolescent females experienced intensified peer relationships in conjunction with some increased distancing or friction in parent-child interactions, parents and adolescents in both families did indicate that their inter-relational difficulties had subsequently been alleviated somewhat. It appears that the increased involvement with peers and concurrent parental conflicts may have represented the girls' transition to a practising stage during the period of about mid-adolescence. The onset of somewhat more harmonious interactions by late adolescence could, therefore, be indicative of the late adolescent daughters entry into or progression through a rapprochement phase of the separation-individuation process.

Cognitive Development

The late adolescent females exhibited an awareness and consideration of individual parental characteristics, strengths and weaknesses, thereby demonstrating their attainment of a differentiated view of the parents.

Both girls revealed some insight into parental affect and appeared particularly sensitive to sadness or sympathy from their fathers, with comments like, "He seems sometimes sad and wants to know what's going on (in my personal life), but he won't say or ask if I want to tell him," or, "I guess he really feels sorry for me when I get hurt (playing sports). He tries to hide it ..." Their sensitivity to the feelings of others and their ability to acknowledge or recognize the perspectives of others also demonstrated a progression to a less egocentric view than in the case of the younger adolescents.

Evidence of some ongoing egocentrism remained in the late adolescent girls' perspectives however. This was particularly evident in the girls' tenacious adherence to their own attitudes or beliefs when these were challenged by their parents. At times their resistance to even considering or listening to parental views served to indicate a fear of being easily influenced or convinced to relinquish commitments which had only tentatively

been formed. Both girls responded to the perceived threat of parental influence by removing or distancing themselves via a form of separation. In Ellen's case, this involved a withdrawal from verbal communications and problem disclosures with her parents. Her mother commented on Ellen's reluctance to receive parental guidance, stating,

> Mrs. E.: She's kind of private that way. She's – I don't know whether it's because she's afraid of our opinion or if she believes it's her business, you know. It's – I'm still working on that one.
> Interviewer: What would she be afraid of, in your opinion?
> Mrs. E.: I don't know. Maybe it's because we try to see it at another angle and then try to tell her how we feel, at our angle. And maybe she doesn't like that, you know. Maybe she sees it on her own angle and she doesn't want to see it in anybody else's outward angles, you know.

Nancy's resistance to her parents' views was more active, and frequently initiated arguments or conflict in the adolescent-parent relationship. According to Nancy's parents, however, her self-deterministic attitude was particularly evident during mid-adolescence. Her father commented,

> She was kind of rebellious there for a while when she was around 14, you know. She thought she knew everything. About 16 she thought she was old enough to make up her own mind, which she wasn't. That was probably the trouble time, and prior to that she was pretty good then. Like she never was a problem kid. She was always strong headed maybe. Around 15, 16 she was kind of, I don't know, she thought she, like I said, she thought she knew everything but she had to be straightened out.

By late adolescence, however, Nancy's tendency to adhere strictly to an egocentric perspective and reject parental views had reduced considerably, according to Mr. N.:

> After she was about 16 she sort of just grew out of it and went the other way. She's not as rebellious as she was. She grew out of that and that helped. She's from a kid to an adult. ... We don't get into arguments now. We still, once in a while, I'll tell her what I think she should do and she'll tell me whatever she's doing. We don't get into arguments. Not as many as when she was about 14 or 15. When she thought that she knew everything, nobody else knew anything. We'd get into arguments then, but that was only maybe a couple of times a week or once a week that something like that would come up.

Nancy also indicated that she was now willing to consider and at least listen to her parents' opinions, but viewed her own strong personal opinions and independent decision-making as a characteristic of her increased maturity. She noted, "I'm stubborn. I always feel that I'm the one that's right. I listen to (my mom's) opinion and I think about it, but then in the end it's always what I want to do." When asked, "In what ways

do you feel you are different than you used to be?" Nancy stated,

> I think I've matured more. I hope I did at least. I'm more opinionated about almost everything from stuff that goes on in the news, like politics. I used to just sit back there and just listened to my mom's and dad's view points and didn't really say anything until I was about 13. And then my mom and dad said all hell broke loose. And I just started saying "No. That's wrong. I don't agree with that at all."

Nancy's attainment of formal cognitive reasoning was demonstrated in her reflection on philosophical or hypothetical issues and her ability to accommodate or respond to others' perspectives in this reasoning process. As well, Nancy and Ellen both demonstrated their awareness of the limits of parental ego controls for determining or controlling their beliefs and behaviors.

Overall, Nancy appeared somewhat more mature in her cognitive reasoning than Ellen, however. Ellen had formulated some personal beliefs or values independent of parental input largely by turning to peers or a sibling to discuss and reason out various issues or concerns. Her involvement in a moratorium stage of identity formation was evident in her responses to Marcia's (1965) interview questions. However, Ellen still demonstrated some features of a diffused identity and avoidance of personal commitment by ignoring or avoiding certain ideological issues and decisions for the future.

Nancy, on the other hand, had confronted various ideological issues and decisions and had achieved some personal resolutions and a sense of her self as separate from her parents, as well as independent of peer influences. Her identity status of moratorium/achieved reflected her ongoing struggle with ideological issues but indicated a beginning commitment to an independent personal identity. Nancy had a clear sense of her future occupational plans and had spent considerable time and effort in evaluating and formulating her political and religious beliefs, but appeared to have attained more tentative or less informed views in these ideological areas. Nancy also had not attained a fully individuated perspective of her parents as assessed by Josselson's (1977a, 1977b) criterion of being able to give up the idealized parent in fantasy as well as reality. Nancy still maintained an idealistic image at times of how parent-child relations *should* operate. She observed,

> Nancy: (My brother) and I don't really have, like, a parent-peer relationship with mom and dad. It's kind of different ... You know how you see in shows, parents are always there if you even want to talk to them. – (My brother) usually talks to me.
> Interviewer: Who do you usually talk to?
> Nancy: My friends.

In spite of her inability to completely give up the idealized parent image in fantasy as well as in reality, Nancy did demonstrate an awareness of the need for acceptance and forgiveness of parental limitations in her advice to other teenagers on how to achieve a good relationship with their fathers:

> You have to understand where they're coming from. They not so much grew up a long time ago, but they grew up in a different generation, totally different generation. They grew up two generations ago.... You have to accept them as they are and not expect them to be something greater, even bigger and better than they actually are. And not take things for granted. That's what I find now that I tend to do, like to think, "Well, in a years time I won't be here. I won't be seeing him every day, on an every-day basis, and if something ever goes wrong –" Like, it's just depressing to think about it. Like, you had all this time to spend with him and to express how I feel, so I just hope that I get mature enough or I get enough guts to express how I feel before something drastic happens.

Based on Nancy's expressed understanding of a mature, individuated perspective and her demonstrated role-taking ability, she appeared to be the closest of all the adolescents in this study to attaining an identity-achieved or individuated status. As noted previously, however, Nancy's ongoing difficulty in relinquishing her idealized parental image, and her occasional adherence to an egocentric perspective precluded her evaluation as having fully attained a consolidation of individuality (Mahler, 1975) or an identity-achieved status (Marcia, 1966). For the present sample of adolescents, then, it appeared that the attainment of adolescent individuation or identity formation was by no means completed during adolescence and may in fact continue well into the adult years.

4. Inter-Relationship Transitions

As noted throughout the previous sections, the two families in this subgroup experienced transitions in the adolescent-parent relationship which supported theories describing increased peer involvement and distancing or psychological separation from parents

as part of the adolescent developmental process (Blos, 1967, 1979; Erikson, 1968; Freud, 1958). Both late adolescent females indicated that peer relationships (including boyfriends) had become increasingly important to them, and both girls expressed a desire to reduce the amount of involvement and influence that parents had in their lives. As well, both girls were more critical of their mothers, who they considered more intrusive in wanting their daughter to increase their self disclosure, or in expressing disagreement with and attempting to influence the daughters' decisions.

The late adolescent girls' more critical or differentiated view of parents, combined with their resistance to parental authority or influence reflected a transition from the interrelational structure of unilateral authority which was observed in early adolescent boys in this study and in pre-teens or early adolescents generally in Youniss' (1980) sample. Comments from Nancy and her parents illustrated how this transition was experienced in their relationships. Nancy described the change as beginning during early adolescence, when she began to express disagreement with her parents: "I've tried (to express my feelings) ever since I was 12, when I got fed up with 'Nancy do this. Nancy do that.' and Nancy didn't want to do that." Later in the interview Nancy observed,

> I used to just sit back there and listen to my mom and dad's viewpoints and didn't really say anything until I was about 13. And then, my mom and dad said, all hell broke loose. And I just started saying "No. That's wrong. I don't agree with that at all."

Nancy's parents similarly experienced a change in their daughter at about age 13 or 14. They recalled that her friends became "all-important," "she was kind of rebellious," "she thought she knew everything," "we had a lot of arguments, like, she got very strange ideas about certain things," and "that's when she seemed to be finding herself and she developed a new kind of personality, identity." Prior to that transition period, Nancy's mother found her very easy to get along with:

> She was very helpful. She still is. She was just a nice kid and then, all of a sudden, we noticed these changes. Like she got this thing about, um, when she was younger she was in skating and gymnastics and individual sports. She would be out there performing and all eyes would be on her and she got to this point where she didn't want to do this. She didn't want to have people looking at her.... I suppose we had kind of pushed her into all these things ... and it just seemed that anything that we wanted them to do, they weren't doing it.

Nancy's father agreed that early to mid-adolescence "was probably the trouble time, and prior to that she was pretty good then. Like, she never was a problem kid, she was always strong headed maybe."

Although both late adolescent females had rejected the norm of unilateral parental authority, neither girl had attained an interactional structure of symmetrical reciprocity, particularly with respect to the mother. Father-daughter relationships were generally evaluated more positively in this subgroup, with both fathers describing a recent positive transition in their perception of their daughters. In response to the question "Has your relationship with (your daughter) changed much in the past three years?", Nancy's father replied, "Probably, yeah. She's not as rebellious as she was. She grew out of that and that helped. She's from a kid to an adult." Ellen's father responded,

> Mr. E.: No, I think I'm accepting her different from what she was before. I understand that she is maturing, that she's becoming of age and this kind of thing. She wants her freedom. So I have to accept that and treat her different because she is turning in a way.
> Interviewer: What might you do differently towards her now than you did three years ago?
> Mr. E.: Well, I let her have her freedom more, and the way of things, she can make her own decisions better.

Both late adolescent daughters also experienced or anticipated a certain amount of symmetrical reciprocity in their relationships with their fathers which was lacking in their mother-daughter interactions. Ellen commented,

> I think it's easier to get along with my dad because he jokes, he's fun to get along with, and I understand that because, myself, I'm full of laughter. And I think it's always good to get along with my dad. He's all right. I don't know, it's easier to get along with him.

Nancy's remarks reflected an expectation for future improvements in their father-daughter interactions:

> I probably will, if I get to the stage where I can confide to either parent it will be to my dad.... I think when I get older we'll have a better relationship.... And my dad will be the "Oh let her do it the way she wants to do it. She's grown up. She has her own mind." My mom won't be that way.

Interrelationship transitions described by the late adolescent females and their parents thus reflected the girls' progression through a differentiation process involving recognition of parental failings and virtues, followed by a practising stage in which they began to emphasize

their own separateness from their parents and became increasingly attached to peer relationships. During this stage and subsequently, however, the parents' responses to their daughters' increasing independence exerted considerable influence on the extent of adolescent-parent separation or conflict which was experienced in the relationship. In both families the daughters felt that their mothers had greater difficulty accepting a transition in their relationship, to the extent that it appeared that the mothers might be experiencing rapprochement feelings, or conflict between encouraging their daughters' independence and maintaining their former relational structure.

Summary

The late adolescent females and their parents experienced a marked decline in shared activities, with a concurrent increase in the girls' peer activities as well as self-disclosure with peers. Both girls in this subgroup appeared to place great importance on their parents' acceptance of their increasing autonomy and decision-making ability, whether with respect to the level of privacy they desired, their personal preferences in hairstyle or clothing, or their views on politics, religion or morality. In the present sample, the fathers appeared to be more accepting of their daughters' increasing independence and capabilities, and father-daughter relationships appeared to be undergoing a gradual transition from a structure of unilateral authority to increased symetrical reciprocity.

The mothers of the late adolescent girls, on the other hand, appeared to be experiencing a rapprochement conflict between their desire to encourage their daughter's increasing independence and their wish to retain a closer, more symbiotic type of relationship. The mothers' difficulty with their relational restructuring was evident in excessive questions or a desire to know details of the daughter's life, and in overly critical and authoritative responses to the daughter's expressions of separateness or disagreement. Both daughters consequently evaluated their relationships with their mothers less positively than the father-daughter relationship, although one girl anticipated a better relationship and increased symetrical reciprocity with her mother if she herself continued to become more amenable to

mutual self-disclosures.

V. Conclusion

The purpose of the present research study was twofold. The first objective was to provide a thorough investigation and description of the adolescent-parent relationship from the phenomenological perspectives of mothers, fathers and adolescents during early, mid- and late stages of adolescence. The second purpose involved comparisons of the obtained relationship descriptions in order to assess the presence and nature of a process of adolescent separation-individuation from parents, similar to that described by Mahler (1968, 1975) for infants' developmental stages. An overview of the conclusions chapter will demonstrate how these two objectives were attained in this study.

Descriptions of the adolescent-parent relationship from the perspectives of early, mid- and late, male and female adolescents and their parents were summarized and evaluated in the results chapter. A comparison of these relationship descriptions across the overall participant sample yielded the observation of two general transitions in adolescent-parent relationships which appear to traverse the years from early to late adolescence. Transitions were observed in the structure and the content of the relationships and interactions between adolescents and parents. These changes and their implications for the adolescent individuation process are described in greater detail under **(A) Transitions in Adolescent-Parent Relationships.**

In **(B) Mahler's Separation-Individuation Stages** the obtained relationship descriptions were further examined for changes or characteristics which might support or refute the presence of a separation-individuation process like that described by Mahler (1965). The interview data supported a conceptualization of the adolescent individuation process within Mahler's framework of substages, including symbiosis, differentiation, practicing, rapprochement and beginning consolidation of individuality. Moreover, the apparent applicability of Mahler's theory to relationship transitions throughout various life stages suggested the need for a more complex, non-linear model of this developmental process.

Although Mahler's theory and substages of separation-individuation appeared applicable to developmental changes in adolescent-parent relationships, the infant-mother

separation process described by Mahler et al. (1975) differs significantly from adolescent-parent separation. Various theories and definitions of separation which have been utilized in the adolescent literature are described in **(C) The Separation Process**.

In order to differentiate the process of active rejection and distancing in adolescent-parent relationships from the process of adolescent-parental relational restructuring within the context of ongoing interpersonal closeness, the use of two different terms was recommended in **(D) Separation-Individuation versus Individuation-In-Connection**. Individual and interpersonal factors were identified which appeared to influence the respective route chosen. One such factor which has been largely omitted from adolescent research to date was examined in greater detail in **(E) Sibling Relationships**. The need for further research regarding the nature and role of sibling influences on adolescent development was particularly emphasized due to the importance accorded to siblings by the adolescents in this study. Various theoretical views of the siblings' potential role in adolescent development were suggested as a basis for further investigation.

A summary of the adolescent individuation processes observed in the present study resulted in a general but rather cumbersome definition of this process in **(F) Adolescent Individuation**. Clarification of the various components of this definition helped to elucidate the process more clearly. In **(G) Implications and Applications**, theoretical, clinical and societal perspectives of adolescent development and adolescent-parent relationships were discussed, and in **(H) Concluding Comments**, a more optimistic perspective of the adolescent-parent separation-individuation process was suggested.

A. Transitions in Adolescent-Parent Relationships

Phenomenological and structural analyses of the participants' interview responses were conducted as described under **Data Analysis** in the Research Design chapter. Results of these analyses yielded evidence for two general transitions related to a process of separation-individuation in adolescent-parent relationships. The first transition involved the transformation of the relational structure of adolescent-parent interactions. The relational

structure evident in early adolescence generally involved adolescents' acceptance of unilateral parental authority. Early adolescent-parent interactions were predominantly characterized by a norm of complementary reciprocity. By late adolescence, the participants had generally attained a measure of personal autonomy and had achieved a structure of increased symmetrical reciprocity in their interactions with at least one parent. The transition observed in relational structure for the present sample supported Youniss and Smollar's (1985) and Grotevant and Cooper's (1986) descriptions of similar transitions in adolescent-parent relationship for their samples.

The phenomenological analysis of participant's responses to an initial, unstructured inquiry into the nature of the adolescent-parent relationship revealed a second transition, involving the content or qualitative focus of adolescent's relations with their parents. Early adolescents and their parents largely emphasized shared activities as forming a basis for their good interpersonal relations. By mid-adolescence shared activities had been relegated to a minor role, and mutual verbal communications had gained primacy. Late adolescents focussed on the importance of shared authority and decision-making in their interactions with parents. Interestingly, these transitions in adolescent-parent interactions from shared activities, to verbal communications, to shared authority appear to recapitulate Piaget's sequence of children's cognitive developmental stages, from an initial sensori-motor phase, to preoperational and concrete operational stages characterized by the development ~~of~~ language and perceptual skills, to a final stage of formal operations incorporating hypothetical reasoning and conceptualization capacities.

In light of the overall interrelational transition from a structure of unilateral authority to one of increased symmetrical reciprocity in adolescent-parent relationships, the observed interactional changes become even more significant. It appears reasonable to hypothesize that the shifts in the adolescent's phenomenological focus regarding their relationships with parents reflect a transition in the interactional realms in which they seek or are accorded mutuality or symmetrical reciprocity with their parents. Thus, it may be that the relational structure of unilateral parental authority is transformed to more symmetrical reciprocity first in the realm

of shared activities for pre- and early adolescents, then is altered for verbal communications between mid-adolescents and their parents, with mutual decisions and shared authority becoming increasingly evident in late adolescence and adulthood. The significance of this observation lies largely in the consequent view of the task of individuation and relational restructuring between adolescents and parents as a complex, multi-levelled process with age-related variations in levels of autonomy or individuation attainment for different interactional activities. This view reflects a distinct difference from a conceptualization of a global individuation process in which the adolescent is presumed to gradually attain increased independence and autonomy in all areas of adolescent-parent interaction simultaneously. The results of this study thus support a view of individuation as a quality of interpersonal relationships rather than as an individual characteristic (or individuated *person*) which researchers such as Josselson (1980) describe. Although generalizations from the present study are limited by sampling and methodological constraints a similar perspective was advanced by Grotevant and Cooper (1986).

B. Mahler's Separation-Individuation Stages

Specific characteristics of the adolescent-parent relationships within each subgroup were examined within the framework of Mahler's theoretical stages of a separation-individuation process. For the present sample, Mahler's concept of separation-individuation in infancy provided a valuable paradigm for conceptualizing transitions in the parent-child relationship during adolescence as well. Table 4 on p. 175 presents a summary of key relationship variables observed for each adolescent subgroup and identifies the respective stage in adolescent-parent separation-individuation to which it applies.

Table 4

A summary of separation-individuation factors identified for adolescent-parent relationships during early, mid-, and late adolescence

	Early Adolescent Males	Early Adolescent Females	Mid-Adolescent Males	Mid-Adolescent Females	Late Adolescent Males	Late Adolescent Females
Symbiosis	- adolescents' view of parents as omnipotent and omniscient. - relational structure of unilateral authority in shared activities, verbal communications, future goals, parenting style. - conflict and discord limited and over minor issues. - general consensus re: major values and attitudes. - parents generally determined goals and acceptance performance levels. - limited investment in peer relationships.	- perceived maternal omnipotence, intense identification with maternal attitudes and shared activities observed in one mother-daughter relationship. - adolescents' ongoing egocentricity, acceptance of parental authority and limited recogition of parents' motivations or needs reflected elements of a symbiotic relationship. - major attitudinal and values congruence between adolescents and parents.	- intense closeness in shared activities and identification with attitudes or values in two adolescent-parent relationships appeared to occur in response to parental encouragement.	- no indicators of symbiosis were identified.	- no indicators of symbiosis were identified.	- no indicators of symbiosis were identified.

	Early Adolescent Males	Early Adolescent Females	Mid-Adolescent Males	Mid-Adolescent Females	Late Adolescent Males	Late Adolescent Females
Differentiation	- adolescents comparing characteristics of mothers and fathers, or their parents and an older sibling reflected a critical, evaluative assessment of parents. - adolescents beginning to lose idealized view of parents and to recognize their individual failings and virtues. - differentiating self from parent in mutually acceptable realms like attire and attitudes re: sports or travel.	- adolescents' assessment of parents based on shared activities or their similiarity to self, or to siblings. - adolescents' comparison of their own familial relations with those of peers. - father-daughter verbal communications becoming constrained re: personal or sexual topics. - one daughter demonstrated increased willingness to express different attitudes and values from those of her mother. - expressions of voluntary co-operation with parental expectations.	- adolescents' comparison of parents to each other, self, resulted in differentiation of interactions, self disclosures and attitudes with respect to each parent. - critical differentiation of peers as less reliable confidants than parents and as opinionated or uninformed, but also as becoming more tolerant of individual differences toward the end of this stage. - increased conflicts and disagreements with parents, and adolescents' awareness of causes for these and coping strategies they could use. - criticism of parental expectations which were perceived as excessive or unrealistic.	- self disclosures differentiated on basis of perceived parental interest in the topics, and personal or sexual issues usually not discussed with fathers. - differentiation of peers as less-experienced or one-sided in advice-giving; less influence from peer pressures - object constancy demonstrated in adolescents' recognition of parents' good intentions even during times of conflict. - recognition of parents as complex, fallible individuals. - adolescents demonstrating beginnings of a self-differentiated, decentered perspective.	- differentiation of positive and negative characteristics of both parents had been accomplished, but mothers were now particularly criticized for any tendancy to be overprotective or intrusive. - differentiation of peers was described as having occurred during about mid-adolescence. - adolescents differentiation of self as individuals with human failings or virtues increased more toward late adolescence. - adolescents differentiated between parents and peers as preferred confidants for different problems or topics.	- parents, peers and siblings were accorded differential preference for various conversation topics or self-disclosures. - adolescents showed sensitivity to the needs and feelings of others, and demonstrated role-taking ability.

	Early Adolescent Males	Early Adolescent Females	Mid-Adolescent Males	Mid-Adolescent Females	Late Adolescent Males	Late Adolescent Females
Practicing	- no indicators of practicing were identified.	- increased involvement in peer relationships, with concurrent ongoing reliance on parental attachments (checking back to a "secure home base") - adolescents' increasing interest in verbal communication of ideas and symmetrical reciprocity in activities shared with parents.	- adolescents demonstrated diversifying interest in such things as current affairs, politics, etc. and began assimilating parental attitudes as their own. - increased symmetrical reciprocity in shared activities and verbal communications. - increased peer activities. - desire for independence (use of the car, avoiding family holidays). - disengagement and rejection of close parental ties in one father-son relationship. - parents accepted increasing autonomy in adolescents' self-determination of some goals and ideas.	- increased adolescent involvement in peer or extra-familial activities. - increased symmetrical reciprocity in shared activities and verbal communications with parents. - more authoritarian parenting styles led to increased separation, and reduced self-disclosure. - overall, parenting style was increasingly authoritative, sanctioning and encouraging increased adolescent autonomy. - more symmetrical reciprocity in peer relationships. - increased interest in world event and social or political issues.	- adolescents' increasing extra-familial involvement included social, educational and employment commitments. - parents and adolescents both accepted and actively chose to disengage from shared activities. - increased adolescent decision-making and acceptance of personal responsibilities. - parents accepted and encouraged the adolescents' relative independence in choice of lifestyle and personal goals. - adolescent involvement in intimate heterosexual friendship.	- parents and adolescents sanctioned reduced activities between adolescent and parent, and those shared were more often symmetrical in form. - adolescents withdrew from personal disclosures with parents in preference for peers. - adolescents emphasized ways in which they were unique or independent from parents or parental controls. - one mother's attempt to increase interrelational intimacy with her daughter was rejected as too intrusive, but the adolescent alluded to a possibility that she might accept such restructuring in the future. - overall intensification of peer relationships and beginning involvement in heterosexual commitments. - adolescents expressed personal views and perspectives regarding ideologies or current affairs.

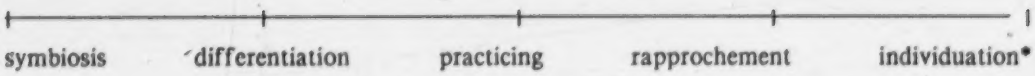
	Early Adolescent Males	Early Adolescent Females	Mid-Adolescent Males	Mid-Adolescent Females	Late Adolescent Males	Late Adolescent Females
Rapprochement	- no indicators of rapprochemennt were identified.	- no indicators of rapprochemennt were identified.	- adolescents' demonstrated a desire to discuss ideological and values issues with parents and to resolve disagreements or conflicts between them.	- greater self-reflection and self-acceptance as a result of practicing experiences. - adolescent-parent conflict in previous years was followed by adolescents' increasing self-differentiation and decentered perspectives, which effected the girls' awareness of negative aspects of separation from parents and resulted in their desire to reduce interpersonal conflicts and attain more intimate, supportive relationships.	- the adolescents' critical assessment, particularly of their mothers, reflected a struggle against any regressive pull to a more symbiotic relationship. - adolescents expressed a desire for increased intimacy and personal disclosure with fathers, concurrent with demonstrations of increasing autonomy and independence in decision-making and activities. - capitulation to parental authority continued, although in a reduced form toward mothers, but adolescents expressed a desire for increased symmetrical reciprocity in their relationships. - in one adolescent-father relationship, the participants experienced a need for an extended period of physical separation in order to attain increased symmetrical reciprocity. - some parents experienced difficulty restructuring their relationship with the adolescents, demonstrating a desire to remain attached or to maintain former interactional structures.	- authoritarian parenting techniques resulted in increased adolescent-parent conflict and separation. - adolescents indicated a desire for increased symmetrical reciprocity in the parent-adolescent relationship. - some parents appeared to find it difficult to relinquish their unilateral authority in spite of professing acceptance of their daughter's autonomy and maturity. - fathers' tendency to leave rule setting and interventions more up to mothers may have influenced the adolescents' perception of them as less intrusive or more accepting. - adolescents still sometimes criticized their parents for not living up to their idealized fantasy of what a parent should be.

	Early Adolescent Males	Early Adolescent Females	Mid-Adolescent Males	Mid-Adolescent Females	Late Adolescent Males	Late Adolescent Females
Consolidation of Individuality and emotional object constancy	- no indicators of consolidation identified.	- no indicators of consolidation identified.	- no indicators of consolidation identified.	- no indicators of consolidation identified.	- parents and adolescents' acceptance of a reduction in shared activities reflected their conviction that adolescents had attained internalization of parental superego controls and both acknowledged the limits of parental ego to control the adolescent. - adolescents recognized a continuity between their own experiences and those of their parents.	- parents and adolescents appeared to ultimately acknowledge and accept the adolescents' autonomy and limitations of parental ego controls. - adolescents demonstrated less adherence to egocentric perspectives and incorporated or considered parental views in formulating their decisions.

The applicability of Mahler's substages of separation-individuation to similar processes at adolescence is also particularly interesting in light of the general transitions observed in adolescent-parent relationships. Clearly, significant differences exist in infants' and adolescents' respective tasks and accomplishments during separation-individuation (as described in a later section) or cognitive development. Yet the applicability of similar substages within developmental processes for different age groups implies a continuity in individual development throughout the lifespan. Rather than considering developmental progress from a linear perspective, as illustrated in Figure 1, it might be more accurately represented, as suggested by Gesell and his colleagues (Gesell & Ilg, 1949; Gesell, Ilg & Ames, 1956) in a spiral configuration to incorporate the continuity and ongoing nature of tasks and processes involved in individual development, as suggested by Figure 2.

Within this second configuration, alternate loops of the spiral might reflect individuation processes within a series of relationships with different partners or a restructured form of a previous relationship which has gained new significance. The loops illustrated in figure 2 thus might hypothetically represent individuation in the (a) infant-mother, (b) adolescent-mother and (c) adolescent-peer relationships.

To illustrate this concept further, the entry phase of each significant relationship often involves a period of symbiosis or intense identification and overly positive evaluation of the other partner. In infancy symbiosis is perceived as psychological fusion of mother and infant. At the onset of adolescence symbiosis is reflected in the child's compliance with a parent who is seen as omnipotent and omniscient. Symbiosis in the young adult's commitment to a new love relationship is evident in the desire to spend as much time as possible with the seemingly perfect new partner. The interrelational fusion or "love affair" in these relationships is gradually relaxed to a more differentiated view of the partner's strengths and weaknesses. The relationship itself concommitantly gradually loses some of its primacy as the ever-present pressures of internal and external changes and drives demand attention and action. The individual's immersion in a practicing process, with its focus on exploration and developing personal competence within the world outside of the relationship waxes and wanes



*for the sake of brevity this term is used as an abbreviation of Mahler's stage of "consolidation of individuality and the beginnings of object constancy."

Figure 1. Stages of separation-individuation in a linear model.

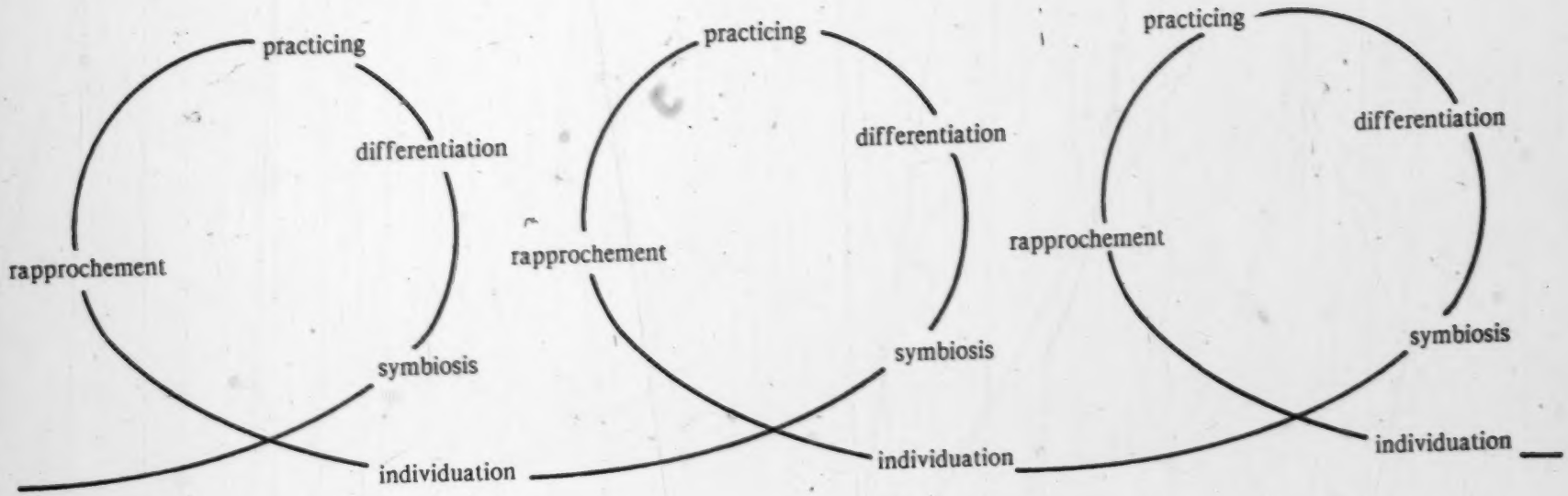


Figure 2. Stages of separation-individuation within a spiral model.

as the individual "checks back" or occasionally becomes re-immersed in the relationship to ensure the maintenance and continuity of the interpersonal base. The attainment of personal growth or change through the practicing process, however, necessitates restructuring within the interpersonal relationship as well. This is complicated by the fact that not only one, but both partners in the relationship are likely to develop and change individual skills, attitudes, needs and strengths, although not necessarily in a simultaneous or complementary manner. A rapprochement stage occurs as the two partners struggle to restructure their interrelationships and to reconcile the newly acquired aspects of independence with the gratifying aspects of the former relationship. If this is successfully accomplished, each partner achieves a more individuated role within the relationship, becoming freer of regressive or conflictual drives and able to continue experiencing personal growth and development.

When partners are unsuccessful in restructuring their inter-relationships, however, they may become enmeshed in a static relationship at one of the substages of separation-individuation or may separate or remove themselves from the relationship altogether. Such vicissitudes in the separation-individuation process are well documented in the research literature for adolescence and childhood. Similar processes and difficulties have been observed during later developmental stages in clinical work involving adult relationships. For example, Scarf (1986) described a stage of interrelational "paradox" observed by clinicians working with severely dysfunctional marital partnerships. Scarf noted that the state of paradox exists "at the very lowest level of differentiation on the developmental ladder.... In this world neither of the two major human needs – to be a separate self and to be emotionally connected to another human being – can be met, because being close to a partner and not being close to a partner are equally terrifying prospects" (1986, p. 72). Thus, partners in a paradoxical relationship appeared unable to adequately attain or progress beyond the interrelational stage of symbiosis. Alternately, at the highest level of separation-individuation between members of a couple, "autonomy and intimacy are mutually self-supporting and self-enhancing states of being" (Scarf, 1986, p. 76).

The application of Gesell's spiral model of development to the theory of separation-individuation emphasizes that, although different parameters delineate this process during infancy, adolescence and adulthood, the theory and its substages can be seen as applicable to the development of interpersonal relationships throughout the lifespan.

C. The Separation Process

Despite the similarity of transitional stages in the development of parent-child relationships during infancy and adolescence, it is imperative to note that the separation-individuation process in adolescence involved distinctly different tasks and processes than those of infancy. The problems inherent in adapting terminology specified for one developmental stage to similar processes in another life-period are illustrated in the following examination of various definitions which have been applied to the term "separation" in the adolescent literature.

Variations in the attributed meanings and processes subsumed within different conceptualizations of a separation process have contributed to considerable confusion and controversy regarding the nature of separation in adolescent development. Previous researchers have incorporated at least four different processes within this terminology:

1. Mahler's definition of separation – Within Mahler's (1968, 1975) theory, separation was defined as the infant's intrapsychic differentiation, distancing and disengagement from symbiotic fusion with the mother. According to Mahler, the infant, during the early symbiotic stage of existence, perceives itself and the mother as a unity. Symbiosis "describes that state of undifferentiation, of fusion with mother, in which the 'I' is not yet differentiated from the 'Not-I' and in which inside and outside are only gradually coming to be sensed as different" (Mahler, 1975, p. 44). Although Mahler's theory of separation-individuation was later applied to adolescent development, some theorists like Blos (1967) and Kaplan (1984) are careful to distinguish between the infantile separation-individuation process and adolescent individuation. According to Kaplan,

"Adolescent individuation, which involves the reconciliation of genitality with morality is altogether different from the separation-individuation of infancy. Separation-individuation occurs once and only once, during the first three years of life; it refers only to an infant's gradual recognition and acceptance of the boundaries between his own self and those of the mother" (1984, p. 95).

In Mahler's theory, then, the separation process involves a psychological or mental attainment of a sense of self and object. It never refers to physical absence, nor does it involve interpersonal distancing or differentiation, which Kaplan would argue constitute a process of individuation rather than separation.

Other adolescent theorists have been less reluctant to re-apply the separation concept to various seemingly analogous processes in adolescence. Within these applications a further lack of consensus or consistence is apparent in the alternate views which were advanced.

2. The "turmoil" theorists view of separation - Working largely from a clinical, psychoanalytic perspective, these theorists (Blos, 1979; Erikson, 1968; Freud, 1958) identified a separation process involving adolescent rebellion and emancipation from, or rejection and decathexis of parental love objects. According to this view conflicts were pervasive and inevitable within adolescent-parent relationships during the adolescent's struggle for freedom from family dependencies and increasing investment in external connections, generally within the adolescents' peer group (Burke & Weir, 1977; Erikson, 1968; Marohn, 1980).
3. Separation as absence - In some research the concept of "separation" referred to actual physical separation between parent and child as a result, for example, of parental death (Garber, 1983) or divorce (Moore & Hotch, 1982), or the adolescent's moving out of the parental home (Moore & Hotch, 1983; Wechter, 1983).
4. The relational perspective of separation - Theorists like Grotevant and Cooper (1986) or Youniss and Smollar (1985), introduced yet another perspective of a separation process at adolescence, involving the adolescents' and parents' mutual restructuring of their

interactions and former roles within the parent-child relationship. These authors contend that separation in the sense of emancipation from or abrogration of parental influences and affiliation does not generally occur during adolescence. Instead, adolescent development or individuation is seen to occur within the context of ongoing commitment and interdependence.

Within this perspective adolescents' relationships with parents and peers are seen as dynamic components of an individuation process involving the adolescent's ongoing experimentation with expressions of individuality and autonomy yet remaining constrained by the acceptable limits defined within the interpersonal relationship. In this view, a separation process is reflected in the existence of tension or conflict in the adolescent-parent relationship resulting from "a step too far toward asserting individuality" (Youniss & Smollar, 1985, p. 158) on the part of the adolescent, or a resistance to accepting change and redefinition of former roles on the part of the parent.

D. Separation-Individuation versus Individuation-in-Connection

The present research findings generally supported the relational perspective of an adolescent individuation process which involved the growth of personal autonomy and identity within the context of ongoing connectedness or intimacy. By far the majority of adolescents and parents interviewed indicated that they continued to experience ongoing closeness, involvement and caring in their interrelationships.

Within the context of overall ongoing connectedness and affection in the adolescent relationships examined in this study, varying indexes of interpersonal conflict, distancing, or withdrawal were observed which could be seen as indicative of a separation process. Particularly in comparisons of individual relationships, a distinction could be drawn between relationships which facilitated a greater degree of interactional restructuring while maintaining close ties versus relationships characterized by increased interpersonal distancing or discord as the adolescents and parents sought to restructure their interactions.

Based on the distinct qualitative differences observed in the two types of relationships described here, it is suggested that the term "adolescent individuation," or "individuation-in-connection," be assumed to describe the process of adolescent-parent relational restructuring within the context of ongoing connectedness. The term separation-individuation could then be applied to those relationships evidencing a process of interrelational distancing and dissociation between adolescent and parent.

The two processes observed in the present research reflect distinctions which have often been emphasized in feminist depictions of male versus female developmental tasks (Chadorow, 1974; Gilligan, 1982a, 1982b). Contrary to implications that separation-individuation is primarily a masculine process, while individuation-in-connection characterizes female development, the present findings indicated that both males and females might follow either route, and they might furthermore alternate their relational style for interactions with either parent. Relationship characteristics other than adolescent gender appeared more significant to the respective route chosen for adolescent-parent individuation. These may prove useful as a basis for further investigation, or for consideration in clinical work with adolescents and families.

Factors which appeared to increase the likelihood of a process of separation-individuation in adolescent-parent relationships included:

- authoritarian parenting style, particularly during mid- to late adolescence;
- parental expectations or demands which are perceived as excessively high or unrealistic (especially in mid-adolescence);
- limited time or opportunities for communication and discussions (especially in mid-adolescence);
- excessive parental criticism or non-acceptance of adolescents' views or opinions;
- adolescents' devaluation of their parents. Parents seemed to be accorded low status by the adolescent if they were perceived as (a) being out of touch with the times, (b) having limited life experiences, or education, (c) espousing closed-minded views, or (d) demonstrating negative or maladaptive behaviors (like alcohol abuse).

Factors which appeared to increase the likelihood of an individuation-in-connection process in adolescent-parent relationships included:

- verbal communications characterized by candid, non-judgemental discussions of a wide variety of topics;
- parents' self-disclosure of their own past experiences (provided that the adolescent was interested in them and could see their relevance);
- adolescents' attainment of good school grades and "good behaviors";
- marked difficulties in adolescents' peer relationships;
- adolescent and parental sensitivity and response to each other's fluctuating needs or moods;
- marked separation or conflict in relation to one parent appeared to increase the likelihood and extent of closeness with the other parent.

E. Sibling Relationships

An unexpected influence on adolescent individuation which emerged repeatedly in the interviews with teens involved their relationships with older siblings. The role of sibling relationships in adolescent development has been almost totally ignored in previous research, which focused largely on contrasting parent and peer influences during this developmental stage. The present study also neglected to address the nature of sibling relationships directly. However, adolescents were asked whether they would prefer to discuss problems with anyone other than parents or friends. Almost all adolescents who had an older sibling expressed a preference to disclose personal confidences or discuss problems with their sibling over either peers or parents.

The exact nature of the older siblings' influence on the process of adolescent separation-individuation could not be determined within the constraints of the present research. The primacy accorded to the sibling relationship for self-disclosure and interpersonal influence, however, suggests that it may be seriously under-valued in classical psychoanalytic theory which views sibling relationships as having only secondary or subordinate significance

derived largely from the primary parent-child relationship. The psychoanalytic view commonly includes siblings in the oedipal conflict, acting as additional rivals, parent surrogates, alternate love objects or fantasized offspring.

Recent sibling research has focused on the role of sibling relationships on child development and family processes (Cicerelli, 1977, 1980; Dunn, 1984; Dunn & Kendrick, 1982; Lamb & Sutton Smith, 1982; Leichtman, 1985). Results of these studies generally emphasized the important socializing influence, particularly of older siblings, and some researchers suggested that siblings may exert influences which are comparable to or even greater than those of parents. Cicerelli (1977) suggested that older siblings, being closer in age to the child, may be able to communicate more effectively than parents about issues such as dealing with peers, coping with difficult teachers, sexual behavior, identity problems and physical appearance. Sibling relationships during the college years, according to Cicerelli (1980), could support young adults' efforts to establish independence from parents and to take on new roles or values.

Rosenberg (1982) also demonstrated the identification and modeling inherent in sibling relationships, observing that sex-stereotyped siblings (younger brothers with older brothers and younger sisters with older sisters) were most stable in their own sibling characteristics over time compared to siblings without this gender-specific influence. Schachter (1982), on the other hand, demonstrated a de-identification tendency, particularly in the first sibling pair, to develop strikingly different personalities and to each identify with a different parent. He suggested that this process functioned as a defense against sibling rivalry by reducing comparison and competition within the family. In both studies, sibling relationships clearly affected processes related to individuation and identity formation, and appeared to possibly exert even greater influence than parental relationships.

Leichtman (1985) specifically examined the influence of an older sibling on the separation-individuation process of a normal child from infancy to age three and concluded

> (1) sibling influences are discernible at the outset of the separation-individuation process and increase in variety and intensity with each new subphase; (2) while the specific effects of sibling relationships on the process are determined by the nature of children's ego development and the salient developmental issues confronting them at

> each stage, the general effects across stages with normal children are those of providing encouragement and support for separation from mothers and influencing identity formation on the basis of increasingly ambivalent identifications with older brothers and sisters; (3) by the third year of life, the extent of sibling influences grows to the point where they are major factors in the consolidation of social and sexual aspects of identity; and (4) as a consequence of this process, "separating" and "individuating" from siblings may well constitute a critical developmental task for many youngsters in the preschool years. (p. 157)

Leichtman's conclusions must be considered tentative at best, as they are based on a single case study, however his observations stimulate similar questions regarding the role of siblings during adolescent individuation. The evidence obtained in the present research certainly suggested that siblings exert a significant influence during adolescence. Adolescents' comments that they preferred to talk to siblings than to either parents or peers about their problems because siblings "could understand better," "have just been through it themselves" or "keep secrets" suggest a variety of potential interpretations regarding the nature and function of sibling relationships during adolescence.

Viewed from various theoretical frameworks, the role of sibling relationships could be alternately described as:

- *parental surrogate* – the psychoanalytic theorists might view the sibling influence as a diluted or secondary reiteration of parental values and roles within a less cathected relationship.
- *transitional role* – another psychoanalytic focus might be on the sibling's provision of an alternate or transitional love object to ease the adolescents' transition from intense psychological identification and symbiosis with parents to greater investment in peers or social cohorts.
- *socializer* – socialization theories would focus on siblings' involvement in direct instruction, modeling, reinforcement or communication of appropriate social roles. An interesting and related process was described by Schachter (1959) and Schacter and Singer (1962), who suggested that a person's interpretation of emotions depended crucially upon social comparison procedures when that person was ignorant about the source of the arousal experienced. The affiliation effect of induced anxiety which Schachter observed appeared stronger in first-born and only children. The presence of an older sibling may

thus also provide an early social comparison base from which the individual can formulate an understanding of various anxiety-provoking stimuli (experiences or concerns) with less need for peer group affiliation, and may relate to earlier development of autonomy or individuation.

- *developmental catalyst* – a cognitive developmental approach might examine the significance of the proximity or similarity of siblings' cognitive developmental stages, as opposed to cognitive differences between parent and child. The older sibling may assist the adolescents' assimilation and accommodation processes by offering cognitive strategies which are more complex, yet still within the level of understanding of the younger sibling.
- *family system facilitator* – from a family dynamics perspective (Satir, 1964), the first-born child enters a formerly diadic parental relationship which must then undergo a rather major transition to a triadic family system. The entry of second-born and subsequent siblings and their incorporation into the system is consequently less difficult as a result of the experiences and changes already implemented via the first parent-child relationships.

The preceding interpretations are in no way intended as an exhaustive or definitive analysis of the nature and role of sibling relationships. By suggesting these various perspectives, however, the researcher hopes to illustrate the need for further investigation and clarification of the sibling's role within the individuation process and adolescent developmental stage. These important relationships during adolescence have been largely neglected in the literature to date, and their examination promises to yield a valuable additional perspective on the nature and development of adolescent relationships and the adolescent-individuation process.

F. Adolescent Individuation

Very broadly summarized, on the basis of this research, adolescent individuation involves a non-specific, non-linear, co-constructed process of synchronous relational restructuring from interactions predominantly characterized by unilateral authority to

interactions involving increased mutuality or symmetrical reciprocity. Elucidation of the various components of this statement follows:

1. *Non-specific, non-linear* - The adolescents in this study did not demonstrate consistently closer relationships to or earlier individuation from any one person (mother, father, same sex parent, peer, etc.). Evidence that adolescents alternately described mothers, fathers, siblings or peers as preferred confidants and most powerful influences suggested that adolescent individuation need not necessarily occur within any one particular relationship. In fact, comments from some teens and their parents suggested a view that any or perhaps all of these relationships might potentially be able to function in the service of advancing adolescent individuation.

   The process is termed non-linear due to the evidence for bi-directional movement observed in one mid-adolescent male's apparent regression from a practicing phase to a more symbiotic father-son relationship. As well, the concept of a spiral process, involving successive progression through various individuation processes was discussed previously as an alternative to linear stage theories of adolescent development which minimize the continuities and similarities of developmental patterns throughout the life-span.

2. *Co-constructed* - Results obtained from the participant's interviews in this study did not support the view of the adolescent as a lone reflective organizer of developmental processes like self-definition, or establishing autonomy. Nor did they support the view of dominant, controlling parents in the role of educators and socializers who gradually formed and molded their developing children. Adolescents and parents were seen as both subject and object of interpersonal influence, at times initiating changes and transitions in the relationship, at times responding to influence by the other. One father's comments clearly indicated the extent to which he actively attempted to encourage and foster the development of independence and autonomy in his early adolescent son:

   > "I'll be pleased when (my son) does grow up and move away from home, because that's a very important step for a young man and it's a whole new ball game after that.... That's not something I see as a natural evolution. It seems to me it has to be instilled in (adolescents). That they want to go out, strike out on their own. So, trying to design a fine line where he'll want to leave home but not too soon. I think parents can help in that perspective...."

> "They (adolescents) have to want things they can't get at home. And whether that's money from a job or freedom – the ability to make their own decisions – these kinds of things, I think if you always leave a little bit missing, they'll want more and the only way to get more is to get out on their own."
>
> "... For example, if my son wants a new bike, he might get a used one – that's sometimes not easy to do. Sometimes it's personally disturbing, but there should be something out there that they want, that will make them look for it."

3. *Synchronous Relational Restructuring* – Developmental synchrony is a biopsychological concept referring to reciprocal effects of parent on offspring and offspring on parent (Tobach, Aronson & Shaw, 1971). Its application in the present study related to the need for restructuring of adolescents' and parents' interrelations at relatively the same time and rate in order to reduce interpersonal conflict and separation.

Change and development are inevitable components of the life processes of every individual and consequently of their relationships as well. As noted in the preceeding section both adolescents and parents exert reciprocal influences and controls over each other and over the process of change or adolescent individuation. The growth of adolescent autonomy and equality within the relationship, for example, requires a reciprocal reduction or relinquishing of the parent's role of unilateral authority and superiority. The parents must also be prepared to relinquish their protective role toward their child – to recognize that they can no longer assume the ultimate authority for decisions made or actions taken. For the parent who lacks confidence in his or her adolescent's ability to make those decisions rationally and independently, the desire to maintain control over their child remains strong. The participants in such a relationship must then assess their options; perhaps maintaining their interactions, often in a somewhat see-saw manner of giving and receiving a bit more independence interspersed with reverting to previous more authoritarian interactions. Alternately, either parent or adolescent may decide that acceptable changes in their relationship are untenable and they may proceed to distance or separate themselves from the relationship in order to avoid continued conflict or to achieve developmental goals.

4. *Increased Mutuality or Symmetrial Reciprocity* – A transition in the structure of adolescent-parent relationships was evident from the comments of participants in this

study. A structure of unilateral parental authority and complementary reciprocity was evident in early adolescence. The early adolescent males in particular perceived their parents as rather omnipotent, beneficient authorities whose judgement and good intentions were largely accepted without question. During the course of adolescence, however, this view underwent gradual transformation to a more differentiated perspective of the parent as having both strengths and weaknesses, good and bad judgements. By mid-adolescence both males and females expressed a sense of voluntary, reasoned co-operation with parental judgement or authority and by late adolescence, adolescents felt capable of making their own decisions and were at times able to influence or change their parents' opinions as well. Other inter-relational features like self-disclosure and interpersonal support similarly underwent a transition from unilateral input to increased symmetrical reciprocity.

It should be noted that the interrelational structure for late adolescents and parents in this study, while demonstrating much greater reciprocity than that of early adolescence, remained markedly asymmetrical in some respects. Comments from late adolescents reflected their feeling that their parents still retained or wished to retain ultimate control over the level of autonomy acceptable within the relationship. Thus, although the late adolescents in this study had achieved considerable progress in differentiation and beginning individuation, they had not attained a fully individuated relationship with parents. The individuation process is therefore seen as an ongoing developmental task which continues beyond adolescence and may, in fact, continue in varying forms throughout the individual's lifespan.

G. Implications and Applications

Perhaps the most significant contribution of the present research is one of possibilities. Within the constraints of sample characteristics and methodology, generalizations from the results must be restricted, yet observations drawn from the adolescent-parent relationships examined in this study suggest powerful alternatives to the more popularly

espoused views of adolescent development. The psychoanalytic view of pervasive rebellion and turmoil between adolescents and parents appears to retain a dominant position in public and even clinical perspectives of adolescence despite mounting evidence to the contrary (Cooper et al., 1983; Douvan & Adelson, 1966; Offer & Offer, 1975; Youniss & Smollar, 1985).

The legacy of psychoanalytic theory has yielded some unfortunate consequences for adolescents and their parents. The concept of almost mandatory rebellion against parental values, authority, and roles during adolescence has received relatively widespread publicity and acceptance, as evidenced by the common use of terms such as adolescent identity crisis, generation gap, and adolescent rebellion. Parents and adolescents alike frequently express their concerns or expectations for future relationship problems even when their present interactions are highly satisfactory. Clinicians may express suspicion or concern when parents and adolescents describe good and close relationships with one another, suspecting the possibility of negative identity formation through foreclosure (Marcia, 1966), or collusion in avoiding the "real" problem.

The need to re-examine this seeming excessively pessimistic view of adolescent-parent relationships has been expressed previously. Erikson (1968), who originally conceptualized the identity crisis of adolescence, himself recognized the need for constraint regarding the term's popular implementation, noting, "To return to the faddish use of the term 'identity confusion,' would some of our youth act so openly confused and confusing if they did not *know* they were *supposed* to have an identity crisis?" (p. 18), and "while at one time we cautiously tried to prove to adolescents that they also hated the parents they depended upon, they now come to us with an overtly ugly or indifferent rejection of all parents and we have difficulty proving to them that they also really like them – in a way" (p. 28). Mitchell (1986) similarly cautioned against an excessively negative or inflexible perspective of adolescents, noting "While writing about youth, charting their customs, and analyzing their psychological makeup, we must caution against being overly sober and straightforward. All the business of youth is not serious. Carefree rambunctiousness and spontaneous zaniness are as vital to young people as are their needs for work and involvement or esteem and belonging"

(Mitchell, 1986, p. 186).

The results of the present research supported the call for greater optimism and complexity in the protrayal of adolescent developmental processes. Interviews with the thirteen adolescents and their parents in this study clearly illustrated alternate possibilities to the overt rebellion and rejection depicted in the classical view. These adolescent-parent relationships were largely characterized by ongoing connectedness and satisfaction between parent and child at all stages of adolescent development. Successive subgroups of adolescents demonstrated increasing individuation which appeared consistent overall with Mahler's stages of separation-individuation. Close examination of individual parent-adolescent perspectives of the relationships, however, indicated that the individuation process could be advanced within two distinct routes: separation-individuation or individuation-in-connection. Based on the families studied, it is not suggested that either one or the other process should be considered preferable. Rather, it appears that individual adolescent development need not necessarily require one particular route for individuation to occur. It can advance within the context of interrelational transitions with either or both parents, or even outside of the adolescent-parent relationship. In families which experience substantial interrelational difficulties as, for example, due to parental alcohol abuse or marked adolescent rebellion against parental control, it appears that adolescent individuation may progress within the context of extra-parental relationships, perhaps with peers, siblings, teachers, coaches or others.

Psychodynamic theories of adolescent development which emphasize an upsurgence in the importance of peer relationships during this stage may thus reflect the fact that they were frequently derived from observations of clinical or deviant populations. Researchers utilizing phenomenological and relational investigations, on the other hand, generally focused on "normal" adolescent populations, which were more likely to evidence cooperative restructuring of relationships within the adolescent-parent dyad. Even within the adolescent-parent relationships, some degree of flexibility was observed regarding the separation process. In families where the relationship with one parent was characterized by greater distancing or separation, the other parent might "fill-in" by providing increased opportunities for intimacy

and individuation within the context of increasing symmetrical reciprocity in the relationship. Moreover, it appeared possible for adolescents and parents to reestablish an intimate and connected relationship at times even following a period of marked separation or distancing. Thus it appears that the process of adolescent individuation can be advanced through multiple potential routes and relationships throughout the period of adolescence.

Clinical Implications

The observation of various potential routes for a separation-individuation process in adolescent-parent relationships carry implications for clinical or counseling work with adolescents. The adolescent group therapy literature, for example, has postulated the critical importance of peer group affiliation and influence as part of the underlying rationale for preferring group over individual or family psychotherapy for disturbed adolescents (Tramontana, 1980). Yet after extensive review of the available literature in this area, Tramontana concluded that little systematic research had been undertaken to assess this point of view. The findings of the present research suggest that either individual, group or family therapy may be beneficial in resolving difficulties related to adolescent individuation, depending on the nature of the problems and the individuals involved.

More extensive research will be needed to determine particular individual and relationship characteristics which indicate preferential use of one form of treatment over another. Factors related to the presence of separation-individuation versus individuation-in-connection processes which were outlined in this chapter may offer a valuable starting point for the development and further investigation of such screening techniques and treatment modalities.

Bloom (1980) previously observed the need for differentiation of parental characteristics prior to selecting intervention strategies. "Normal" separation issues, involving parental distress and lack of understanding regarding their adolescents' behaviors and attitudes, and adolescents' resentment of their parents' inability or refusal to adapt to the rapidly changing roles which they wished to pursue, could often be handled in didactic

individual or family treatment, according to Bloom. He recommended educating both parties regarding normal developmental processes, to provide a basis for "reframing" (Watzlawick, 1978) each other's behaviors. That is, behaviors which they see as rejecting, destructive or angry can then become understood as part of normal adolescent development, and thereby be given a less negative connotation. In this form of intervention, it appears that Bloom is largely giving the family a rationale for accepting each other's differences and behaviors, while reducing the stress or pressure to try to change the other by implying that their difficulties are quite "normal" and therefore both acceptable and transient. A similar but somewhat more active intervention might involve training the family members in problem solving or negotiation techniques to assist them in restructing their interactions toward increasing symmetrical reciprocity. Dynamic family therapy techniques (Satir, 1964) could be employed to demonstrate unproductive interaction patterns and foster changes in these. Furthermore, the therapist might incorporate the observations of developmental changes in the content of adolescent-parent relationships from this study by selectively focusing on increasing symmetrical reciprocity in either shared activities, or verbal communications, or joint decision making, depending on the adolescent's developmental level.

Based on the observations from the present research, marked separation between adolescents and parents is likely to occur during the practicing and rapprochement stages of individuation when parents are reluctant to relinquish authoritarian controls and encourage adolescents' increasing symmetrical reciprocity in the relationship. Bloom described a similar observation:

> The most common dynamic that causes problems in the separation process is parents who are not able to deal with the loss of the fulfillment of needs that was provided by the child and who, as a result, either verbally or nonverbally communicate this to the teenagers, causing the teenager to feel guilty. In terms of the variables that have been discussed, the most prominent influence is the parents' lack of readiness for the separation process and the corresponding equality of the parent-child relationship, which is filled with ambivalence. (Bloom, 1980, p. 148).

Therapeutic interventions with these families, according to Bloom, requires an initial phase of separating the parent and adolescent so that they can experience each other as more independent, and subsequently setting up a situation in which the adolescents' and parents'

needs are better met through a more autonomous relationship of parent and child. Family treatment is most often the modality preferred by Bloom for influencing changes in the behaviors and interactional patterns of the parents and adolescents. When parents are not accessible or sufficiently motivated to cooperate in the treatment, however, Bloom recommends the use of individual psychotherapy, presenting the therapeutic relationship as a model within which the individual can work out a successful separation experience. An alternate suggestion might be the use of a group counseling approach focusing on the encouragement of developing individual autonomy and interpersonal reciprocity within the context of peer relationships.

The observation of two different routes for adolescent-individuation also carries significant implications for adults or peers involved in very central or important non-clinical relationships with adolescents, such as teachers, coaches, siblings, and extended family or friends. For example, adolescents who maintain a close, connected relationship with one or both parents, may turn to these significant others for information or support primarily as a referent or double-check of parental messages or values. On the other hand, adolescents who experience repeated frustration in their attempts to gain increased autonomy or symmetrical reciprocity in relationships with parents may distance or separate themselves from parental relationship. For these adolescents, a friend or relative who is prepared to assume a very central role as a sort of transitional model may assume a very critical function in the adolescents' attainment of an individuated perspective.

H. Concluding Comments

An awareness of personal bias underlying this investigation of the separation-individuation process in adolescent-parent relationships is offered in conclusion to this study. In an attempt to counteract the perceived overemphasis on the separation process in psychodynamic theories of adolescent development, this dissertation may admittedly minimize the confusion, conflict and misunderstanding which can occur as adolescents and parents attempt to negotiate the relational restructuring required in the transition from childhood to

adulthood. The intent of the present focus, however, is not to detract from an accurate portrayal of adolescent-parent relationships but rather to suggest an alternate, more optimistic focus regarding this stage of development.

Therapists and theorists who focus on the importance of separation between parent and adolescent may be losing a chance for a more positive interpretation of the changing interactions between parent and child. In families where a healthy attachment between the parents and children has developed, the adolescent's move towards greater independence may carry with it a form of greater interdependence of parent and child. The child is in some ways able to bring back more to the parents in the form of his or her opinions, successful achievements, expertise, and later possibly even financial assistance, physical support and additional family members in the form of in-laws and grandchildren. To focus on those aspects of the parent-child relationship which have been useful, enduring and internalized by each member in forming their attachment to each other, then, allows both adolescent and parent to recognize those interpersonal features which they value, desire and may seek or foster as they begin to form relationships with others. While the sense of separating and losing some childhood closeness with one's parents may certainly be part of this transition during adolescence, it can be given a realistic perspective in view of the exciting new possibilities for the adolescent who is forming new extra-familial attachments and for the parents renewing their closeness with each other. Thus the transition from childhood to adulthood need not be anticipated in trepidation and anxiety, rather actively approached and welcomed as a mutual and reciprocal growing and learning experience for both adolescents and parents.

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Appendix A

Instructions to Participants

This is a research study of normal adolescents and their parents, and is designed to determine your own personal views about the adolescent-parent relationship. Each adolescent, mother and father will be asked to take part in a private and confidential two-hour interview about this topic. Following the interview each participant will be asked to complete some questionnaires. As well, some personal data will be requested. All of the information asked for here has been shown in other research studies to be possibly responsible for differences in people's behaviors, feelings or views on certain issues. Because of this, your answers to these questions may be extremely important to understanding or interpreting the results of this research, and completion of each item will be very much appreciated. All of your responses will be held in strictest confidence by the interviewer and no one besides the interviewer will have access to any tapes, questionnaires or descriptive information. Any quotes used in the research summary will be carefully edited or altered to ensure that there is no way of identifying the person who made the statement. You are free at any time to leave any question unanswered or to terminate your involvement with the research. A report and summary of research findings will be made available to you at the end of this study.

Please sign below to indicate your consent to participation in an audiotaping of our interview.

NAME: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

If you have a son or daughter under the age of 18 years who is participating in this research, please complete the following:

I hereby give permission for (son's or daughter's name) _____ to participate in a research study of normal adolescents and their parents, and I consent to the audiotaping of interviews with him/her.

SIGNATURE: _____

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This research is being conducted as part of a doctoral dissertation project in Educational Psychology. Request for further information or any questions can be addressed to:

Heike Juergens
#509, 10053 - 111 Street
Phone: 482-5438 (office)
469-0605 (residence)

or the supervising professor:

Dr. H.L. Janzen
Room 1-135 Education North
University of Alberta
Phone: 432-5718

Thank you for your co-operation and assistance.

Appendix B

Adolescent Demographics

1. Name: _____ Tape I.D.: _____
2. Age: _____ School: _____ Grade: _____
3. Subjects studied this year and average course grade to Easter this year. _____

   _____

   _____

   (Have you ever failed a year in school?) _____
4. Number of brothers and their ages: _____
5. Number of sisters and their ages: _____
6. Names, ages and relationship to you of any other persons living in your home. _____

   _____
7. Membership in any clubs/groups. (Have you ever attended camp, been away from home?) _____
8. Hobbies and Interests. (How do you spend your time? With whom?) _____

   _____

   _____
9. Work Experiences. (type of job; your duties; how long you held the job; part-time or full-time) _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____
10. Any convictions - under provincial or federal statutes? _____
11. Extensive psychological or psychiatric treatment? _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

Appendix C

Adolescent Interview

PART I

1. Please describe your relationship with your mother (father) for me, being as complete as you can.
   Has your relationship with your mother (father) always been the way it is now?
   What do you expect it to be like in the future?
   Is there anything else that you can tell me about your relationship with your mother (father) to help me really understand it well?

2. Repeat Question #1 for the opposite parent before going on to the next question. Then complete the interview schedule for the first parent and repeat the schedule for the opposite parent, in a second interview.

3. Overall, are you satisfied with your relationship with your mother (father)? Why or why not? How would you like it to be different? What causes it to be the way it is?

4. What kinds of punishment does your mother (father) use for you? What percent of the time will she (he) use each kind? How effective are they? What kinds of rewards does your mother (father) use for you? What percent of time will she (he) use each kind? How effective are they?

5. Do you and your mother (father) see eye-to-eye on most issues or values? What areas or topics would you agree on or disagree on the most?

6. What are the most important things your mother (father) expects of you? Do you meet her (his) expectations?

7. Would you like to be the same kind of person your mother (father) is when you become an adult? Do you want to have the same kind of life as your mother (father)? In what ways would you like to be similar or different?

8. What kinds of problems would you ask your mother (father) for help with? Why? What kinds would you rather not discuss with her (him)? Why? How does this compare with problems you would tell your friends about? Is there anyone else you would rather talk to about certain problems?

9. What kind of help or advice would you usually get from your mother (father)? How does this compare with help or advice your friends (or others) would give? How likely are you to use their advice?

10. About how often in an average week will you and your mother (father) get into an argument or be angry at each other? What about? Do you sometimes disagree with your mother (father) without showing it or expressing your feelings to her (him)?

11. What kinds of activities do you do with your mother (father) and about how often?

12. If you could offer some important advice to other teenagers on how to have a good relationship with their mothers (fathers) what would you tell them?

13. If you could offer some important advice to mothers (fathers) on how to have a good relationship with their teenagers, what would you tell them?

14. Do you know anyone about your age who gets along better with their mother (father) than you do with yours? How is their relationship different?

15. Do you know anyone who gets along worse with their mother (father) than you do? How is their relationship different?

16. In what ways do you feel you are different than you used to be?

17. When will you (or did you) consider yourself to be "grown up"? How will you know? That is, what factors do you think distinguish a grown-up or adult from an adolescent?

18. Who, or what in your life has had the most influence in making you who you are today? How has he, she or it influenced you? (Possible examples: heros, family, peers, school, religion, literature, sports, politics, other groups.)

19. Who is the person (or persons) you feel close to, would turn to for help with a serious problem or would tell most of your personal secrets to? (If there are several different people that you feel closest to at different times or for different things, name each person, and give some examples of why they are important to you.)

20. Have you ever experienced a separation, death or loss of someone very important to you? What was that like for you? How did you handle it?

21. Occupation
    What do you plan to do in the future (career or study plans)?
    When did you come to decide on _____?
    Have you ever considered anything else?
    When?
    What seems attractive about _____?
    Most parents have plans for their children, things they'd like them to get into or do - did yours have any plans like that?
    How do your parents feel about your plans now?
    How willing do you think you'd be to change this if something better came along? (If S

responds: "What do you mean better?") Well, what might be better in your terms?

22. Religion
Do you have any particular religious preference?
How about your folks?
Have you ever been very active in church or other religious activities (choir, youth group)?
How about now?
Get into many religious discussions?
How do your parents feel about your beliefs now?
Are yours any different from theirs?
Have you ever seriously thought about or come to doubt any of your religious beliefs?
When? How did it happen?
How are things for you now?

23. Politics
Do you have any particular political preference?
How about your parents?
Ever take any political action – join groups, write letters, carry signs – anything at all like that?
Any issues you feel pretty strongly about?
Any particular time when you decided on your political beliefs?
Whom would you like to see as prime minister?

24. What do you believe to be the "meaning of life"? (That is, how in your own mind, do you answer questions like "Who am I?" and "Why am I here?".)
Have you ever spent much time thinking about this question on your own?

25. In general, how would you rate your life these days, using the following scale:
1 – not very satisfying
2
3 – pretty satisfying
4
5 – completely satisfying

26. Would you say that, overall, you are happy with yourself and your behaviors?
1 – completely false for me
2 – mostly false
3 – partly true and partly false
4 – mostly true
5 – completely true for me

27. Is there anything else that you can tell me about your relationship with your mother (father) to help me to really understand it well?

28. Are there any questions that you want to ask me at this point?

Repeat questions 3-15 and 27-28 for the opposite parent.

Appendix D

Parent Demographics

1. Name: _____ Tape I.D.: _____
2. Age: _____
3. Occupation: _____
4. Highest educational level attained.
5. Nationality or ethnic background (explore).
6. Languages other than English spoken at home (explore).
7. Religion.

Appendix E

Parent Interview

1. Describe your relationship with _____ (adolescent son or daughter), being as complete as you can.
   Has your relationship with _____ always been the way it is now?
   What do you expect it to be like in the future?
   Is there anything else that you can add to help me really understand the relationship between you and _____?

2. Overall, are you satisfied with your relationship with _____? Why or why not? How would you like it to be different? What causes it to be the way it is?

3. What kinds of punishments and rewards do you use for _____ and what percent of the time will you use each kind? How effective are they?

4. Do you and _____ see eye-to-eye on most issues or values? What areas or topics would you agree on or disagree on the most?

5. What are the most important things you expect of _____: Do you think your child does or will achieve these?

6. Would _____ like to be the kind of person you are when he (she) becomes an adult? In what ways would he (she) like to be similar or different? In what ways do you want him (her) to be similar or different?

7. What kinds of problems would _____ ask for your help with, and what kinds would he (she) prefer not to discuss with you? Why do you think that is?

8. What kinds of help or advice would you usually give to _____? How much does your help/advice influence _____'s decision?

9. Has your relationship with _____ changed much in the past three years? How?

10. About how often in an average week will you and _____ get into an argument or be angry at each other? What about? How often do you disagree or feel angry without expressing your feelings to them?

11. What things, in your opinion, determine when a child becomes grown-up? How do you rate _____ on these characteristics? How successful do you think _____ will be in becoming a mature grown-up?

12. How would you describe _____'s relations with his (her) friends? Does he (she) have many friends, or just a few; make friends easily; keep the same friends for years or join new groups often? Do you approve of the friends he (she) makes?

13. Do you expect _____ to get married one day? What kind of person do you think he (she) will choose to marry?

14. How do you think you will feel and react when _____ leaves home to live on his (her) own? How will your life change after he (she) moves out?

15. Have you ever experienced a separation or loss of someone very important to you? What was that like? How did you handle it?

16. If you could offer some important advice to other mothers (fathers) on how to have a good relationship with their teenagers, what would you tell them?

17. If you could offer some important advice to teenagers on how to have a good relationship with their mothers (fathers) what would you tell them?

18. Do you know anyone with a son (daughter) about the same age as _____ who gets along better with their child than you do with yours? How is their relationship different?

19. Do you know anyone with a son (daughter) about the same age as _____ who gets along worse with their child? How is their relationship different?

20. What were your own teenage years like for you? What was your relationship with your own parents like?
How old were you when you left home? Why did you leave?

21. Can you describe your relationship with (your spouse) for me?

22. Of the two of you, who is _____ most like?

23. What kinds of activities do you share with _____ and about how often?

24. What influence do you think being Roman Catholic has had on how you have raised your family?

25. Is there anything that you could add to help me really understand the relationship between you and _____?

26. Do you have any questions for me at this point?

27. In general, how would you rate your life these days, using the following scale:
    1 – not very satisfying
    2
    3 – pretty satisfying
    4
    5 – completely satisfying

28. Would you say that, overall, you are happy with yourself and your behaviors?
    1 – completely false for me
    2 – mostly false
    3 – partly true and partly false
    4 – mostly true
    5 – completely true for me

Appendix F

Adolescent Characteristics

	Age	Grade	Academic Average	# Sibs. Older	# Sibs. Younger
Early Adolescent Males	12	7	A-	2	0
	12	7	B	0	2
Females	14	8	B-	1	2
	13	8	B-	0	3
Mid-Adolescent Males	15	10	80%	0	2
	16	11	75%	2	0
	17	12	70%	0	2
Females	15	10	80%	4	0
	15	10	80%	0	2
Late Adolescent Males	18	12	73%	0	1
	19	U of A 2nd year	79% (gr. 12)	1	2
Females	18	1 year postgrad employed – sales	66% (gr. 12)	1	1
	18	12	73%	0	1